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http://artseverywhere.ca/inquiry/learning-education-pedagogy/
http://artseverywhere.ca/inquiry/pedagogy-otherwise/

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Alessandra Pomarico,

co-founder of **Free Home University,**
artseverywhere contributor and commissioning editor,
Eco-versities Alliance's member.

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the Reader

Pedagogy, Otherwise

edited by **Alessandra Pomarico**

The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized. This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are—until the poem—nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt.

That distillation of experience from which true poetry springs births thought as dream births concept, as feeling births idea, as knowledge births (precedes) understanding.

As we learn to bear the intimacy of scrutiny and to flourish within it, as we learn to use the products of that scrutiny for power within our living, those fears which rule our lives and form our silences begin to lose their control over us.

Audre Lorde

Courage

Naked Courage
Fighting Courage
Courage to get up out of the mud
Courage to See
Courage to plant what's missing
Courage to destroy
                    when necessary
Courage to think
Courage to re-think
Courage to give up
Courage Not to give up
Courage to speak
Courage to Decide
Courage to knock
          at the door
               of the government
Courage to knock down
               the door
               of the government
Courage to fly.

Bread and Puppet Theater

Pedagogy, Otherwise

editorial notes by Alessandra Pomarico

There is general consensus and a vast body of literature arguing that the education system is failing us. In the age of a global knowledge economy, the production of knowledge is becoming a financial enterprise and the logic of the market regulates every aspect of society, including how education is organized; we need to analyze the crisis of education in relation to the larger, self-reproducing, *socio-economic* and *political crisis*, which is also a *crisis of the imagination*. Neoliberal forces with their exploitative relationship to the world are putting our communities at risk by altering the emergent, relational, and co-dependent character of the natural and cultural ecologies within which we live. They are destroying the commons, including the diversity of the cultural ones. The primary focus of a different pedagogy — a pedagogy otherwise — should be the promotion of a different learning that prepares us for an ecologically sustainable and socially just future.

Education is part of the apparatus designed to maintain the status quo; schools and universities can be the very place where the *mono culture of the mind* is forged, and cultural trauma and segregation is perpetuated while knowledge becomes yet another commodity. We mostly refer to education using the dominant discourses of the colonial, modernist Eurocentric and westernized imaginary, which excludes or attempts to assimilate other systems of knowledge, other cosmogonies and economies. What we need to learn today is how we can avoid reproducing such asymmetrical, exploitative dynamics towards other beings, and how we can sustain pedagogies that are not based on oppressive, patriarchal, and extractive patterns. Can we imagine a non-hegemonic, post-Capitalistic framework for learning? Some argue that we need to unlearn before we can learn what we don't know yet, or what we once knew and then forgot.

If the education system can be the instrument of oppression and subjugation, aggravating polarization, and causing psychological and cultural traumas, the process of learning constitutes on the other hand a step toward emancipation, self-development and collective transformation. Many radical thinkers in the course of history have attributed to pedagogy a seminal role in the struggle for human rights and in the liberation movements.

In the **Ecoversities Alliance**, a network of people and movements from which some of the conversations presented in this collection originated, we believe that to critically reflect on, and re-imagine the pedagogical process, supporting the formation of autonomous zones of learning, is fundamental to any attempt to produce a paradigmatic shift, necessary in a moment of social and environmental catastrophe. We also consider that collective learning, and learning about collectivity, are particularly urgent while we witness the privatization and segmentation of every sphere of life, an individualistic atomization of the human being, and the transformation of community spaces and times, into virtual, so called "social" media. At costs still hard to evaluate, both in terms of anthropological behavioral changes, emotional isolation and a sense of disconnection, and of voluntary concessions to a more and more invasive system of techno- surveillance and ultimately to new forms of cyber fascism and mass control.

The text-based research around pedagogy has also stemmed within a larger context of inquiries that the online platform **ArtsEverywhere**.ca is providing space for, which is where most of these articles where initially published.

ArtsEverywhere, created by **Musagetes (Ca)** with an international collaborative editorial cohort intends to critically reflect on systems of knowledge (re-)production, to radically re-imagine our ways of learning and being. **Learning, Education and Pedagogy** is one of the lines of inquiry in which we hope to give voice to *"a wide range of perspectives to explore a diversity of ways of knowing, attempting to decolonize the structure of education, contesting universal dominant frames, and focusing on pedagogy as politics. Artistic perspectives, convivial/militant research, theoretical discourses, as well as praxis of both affects and cognition, embodied and land-based practices – these are some of the tools and processes through which we witness how learning communities are unfolding in different contexts, reclaiming autonomous yet interconnected zones of knowledge"*.

The conversations conveyed for **Pedagogy, Otherwise: the Reader** wish to bring in a radical perspective, one that can be informed not only by critical thinking (as criticism is today easily reabsorbed by the hegemonic discourse, following **Rancière**) but also by the existing alternative practices, those experiments thriving to reclaim the right to self-organize the learnings (as well as other fundamental areas of life) assuming the responsibility to self-regenerate communities, focusing on pedagogy as *politics*.

We hope to provide a space to *learn how to learn* from a polyphony of positions, practices, and experiences; to help the formation of an organic, interdisciplinary, and intersectional

reflection, a framework for an open yet situated discussion around what does it take today to *unfold learning societies*[1] and to co-create *really useful knowledge.*[2]; to further conversations and gestures around holistic and transformative learning, and self educate ourselves about pedagogies and philosophies that can restore, rebuild and deepen the connections for the human and ecological wellbeing.

Those invited in this pamphlet reflect heterogeneous approaches, contexts and media. The intention is to make a space for unorthodox methodologies, divergent ideas, and technologies emerging from grassroots, queer, informal, non-vertical, not-only academic, community-based, and context-oriented processes; we will consider activist- and artist-led procedures developing critical learning tools; protocols of convivial and militant researches; insurgent knowledge from communities in struggle and communities of practices; and investigate the ecology of knowledge in an attempt to decolonize learning structures (and super/ infra-structures) through a wider epistemological diversity. We will discover how some convergent spaces and temporary zones of autonomous learning have been created both in the global North and the global South, impacting the social sphere and the life of communities, establishing a form of transnational solidarity, spreading awareness and focusing on the restoration of local ecosystems worldwide.

[1]
"Unfolding Learning Societies: Experiencing the Possibilities." Vimukt Shiksha: A Bulletin of Shikshantar, June 2002. Accessed May 15, 2016. http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/ls3_intro.htm

[2]
"Really useful knowledge" is a notion that the curatorial collective WHW explores through the group exhibition with international artists at Museo National Centro de Arte Reina Sophia, and a connected publication, see also in this book (page 188)

Despite at *Eco-versities Alliance* we find problematic the statement the "world is our classroom" for its implication within a consumerist, colonial and exoticized view on territories and cultures from which we can extract knowledge from, we support what we call "inquiries in solidarity", a system of visits, residencies and real time / real space gatherings, mutual aid initiatives, and peer learning as a way to reinforce our understanding and develop awareness around the systemic change we are, together, called upon. If we are *'planetary subjects rather than global agents,'* in the words of **Gayatri Spivak [3]**, then our stories, objects, debts, wars, resources, languages, economies, and cultures are entangled, and our destiny is interrelated. In this spirit, the collection of text here try to balance theoretical and discursive analysis and differently oriented contributions around pedagogy with intimate letters, personal commentaries and reflections coming out of enlivened experiences, poems and art based processes. In the session What we are learning: responses to *Pedagogy, Otherwise* — a few contributors were invited to review ideas and themes that emerged on our first round of exchange, acting as quick respondents in a sort a 'written round table' to help surface the learning and forward our reasoning.

The pamphlet is concluded with an annotated bibliography of selected influential critical peda-

[3]
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Death of Discipline (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

gogues, theoreticians, and thinkers that have significantly contributed to the topic which we hope to expand thanks to the references and suggestion of everyone in our expanded learning group.

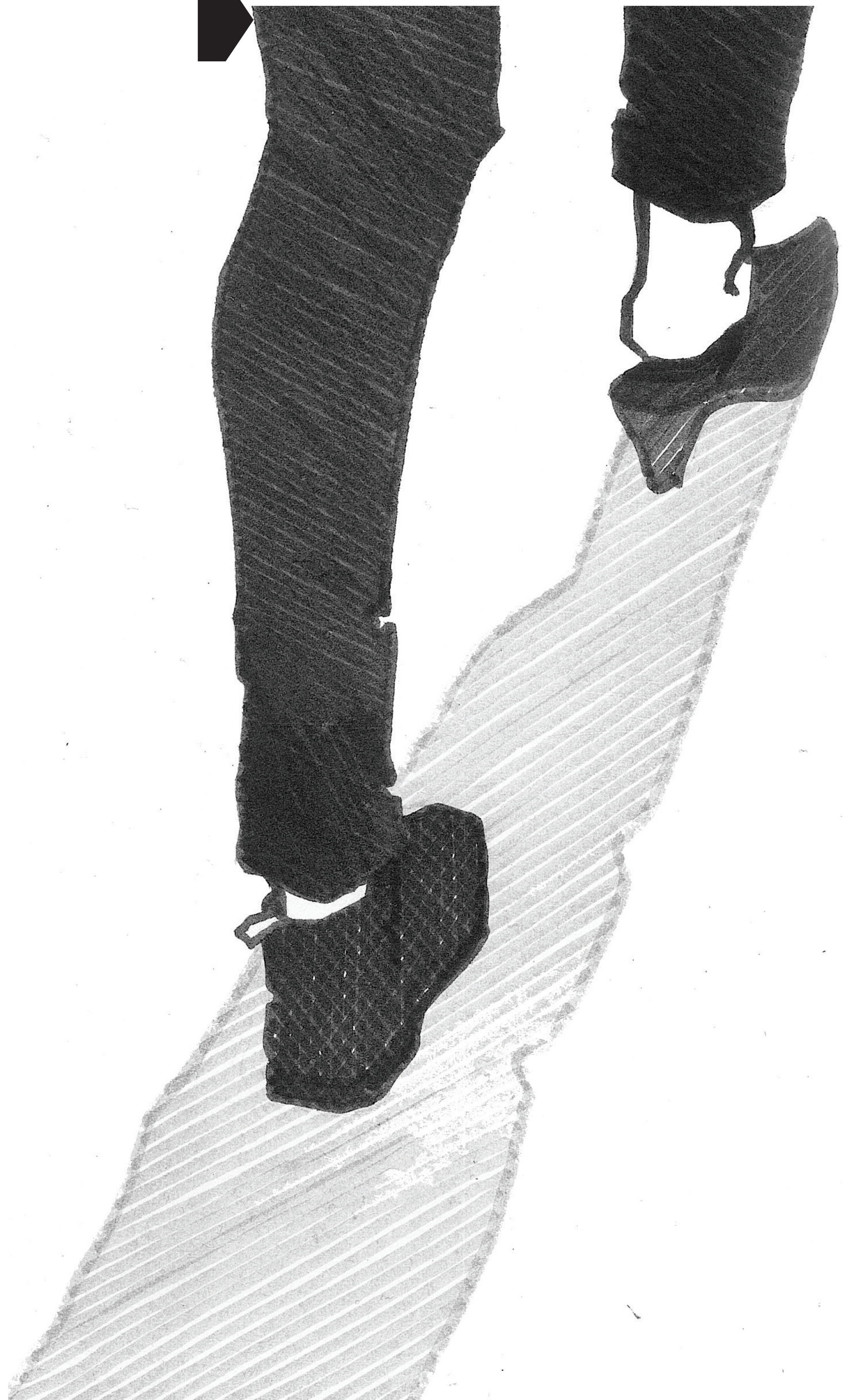
We hope that **Pedagogy, Otherwise: the Reader** will constitute the **# 0** of an on-going journal, that can stimulate conversations and the production of other texts or forms of reports, and that we can host and disseminate contributions from more artistic, indigenous, community-based and activist initiatives, from platforms and conferences, self-organized networks, academic and non academic studies, from non-governmental cultural groups and extra-state agencies, and from all those *brave spaces*, formal or informal, where sharing knowledge differently is conceived as a way to create a different world.

Alessandra Pomarico is an

independent curator, writer and educator organizing international residencies, public programs, festivals, exhibitions and research-based projects at the intersection of arts, pedagogy, social issues, and nano-politics. She is interested in ways in which artistic thinking and practices can contribute to the foundation of autonomous para-institutions and community self organized initiatives, in support of feminist, non hierarchical, and decolonial spaces.

Alessandra is a co founder of Free Home University, an artistic and pedagogical experiment co-designed with an international group of artists and thinkers, investigating new possibilities to produce knowledge and share the learning by experiencing life in common.

Alessandra is an editor and a contributor of the online platform www.artseverywhere.ca



Radical Pedagogy is NOT

A collective exercise lead by Dani D'Emilia, during the 2016 Free Home University session, adapted into a Brechtian hip-hop ballad by Alessandra Pomarico and Nikolay Oleynikov.

The poem was originally performed at the Impulse Festival as part of Learning Plays—A symposium on radical pedagogy and knowledge without borders.

It was first published at artseverywhere.ca

Radical pedagogy is
not-this-not-that
wet wet wet
sweat baby sweat
Shall we start just like that?

Radical Pedagogy is not
about teaching
no preaching
no instructions
how many reductions
of meaningful things
my brain retains during
my butt muscle contraction

Radical Pedagogy is not
a good shepherd
bringing us peace on a plate
look at that!
there is a head
of a mean father, he was
angry at you for the history lesson
            you refused to learn
now you start to be very concerned with what

Radical Pedagogy really is not
Radical Pedagogy is not
scared (-of what?)
of institution,
oh yeah, you know,
based on an intuition
oh yeah,
an insinuation, *you know*
A piece of coral or a quarrel
or a squirrel squirting aquarelle
(tell me, what's the price per barrel?)
give-r-away-give-r-away-give-r-away now

Radical pedagogy is not on sale!
*i*t's not profitable, collectible
not replicable
it's not to be possessed, recessed, consumed, owned, assessed:
not a product, not a debt
Are you well-paid?
Am I too late?

Wait!
I debate
the lie of scarcity
being imposed, take a pause
think more
what **Radical Pedagogy is not.**
Radical Pedagogy is not
what?!
the summer in Italy this year is quite hot
How about a mermaid gettin' laid?
Isn't it great?

Slam! Ta-ta-da! Let the boys be boys!
Remember Jos. Beuys?
Remember Free Int. University?
How 'bout a chauffeur gettin' too late?
nineteen sixty-eight!
No, you don't remember?!
you were not a member of that session?
or you simply didn't study you lesson?!

so, boy whatcha' waiting for?
an angry father to punish you?
a good shepherd to serve you
all the answers on a plate?

just a little bit of history repeating
while your guitar is repeatedly weeping
my heart's insistently beating
thinking
it was overheard
or overtalked
or over painted\over taught
over heated\over thought
chained
to the point it causes you a back pain
to the point you can't move any further for many days
I've got the poison I've got the remedy

so let's think of what
we don't want it to be
in alphabetic order, kids
repeat after me:
A – Neoliberal
B – Exploitative
C – Colonialdominantoppressivepatriarchal
D – Apologetic
N – Not useful
N-Not not really useful
N-N-Not not not organized not not convivial
N-N-N-Not not militant
N-N-N-N-Not not insurgent
But sometimes it's a knot: a clumsy democracy=banal hypocrisy

isn't education today a HOT SPOT
being a student in Ramallah
isn't it hot? – SHOT!
being a teacher in Oaxaca isn't it hot?
123456789 – SSSSHHHHOT!
– wanna cut it short?

what **Radical Pedagogy can NOT?**
Radical Pedagogy
Can't resolve
but **Radical Pedagogy**
will not stop us seeking the fruits of truth

Now
What Radical Pedagogy asks?
Question: How do we wanna win?
Whaat?!
a game?
a war?
a battle!

May I drink drink right now?
Right from my bottle
Right to the bottom

Dear Eco-versities friends

Dear Eco-versities friends,
I'm in as many places and was glad to go all over the place with you, Alessandra… such a beautiful journey, along with so many others that came before. Thank you all for sharing so much of yourselves. It makes me less hesitant to share my similarly long reflections, recognizing that they may enrich you as much as yours have enriched me. I now walk with your stories, struggles and questions, sharing your sorrows and joy, while feeling carried along with you - a precious gift that I honor.

I also will not feel offended if you decide to skip this particular reflection. It is by no means conclusive or comprehensive, merely what I have at the moment, assembled snippets from emails, notes, quotes, and reflections woven together without feeling the need to perfect or finalize:

NAVIGATING AN INTERNAL COMPASS

> *"Since returning home, I find myself wanting to share so many stories from my journey... but there are some things that no words can capture, such as the simple richness of beautiful relationships blossoming."*

From Jordan to Germany to Portugal to Slovakia, so many pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place, where one would've hoped but feared to expect.

I honestly don't know how I ended up where I was most of the time, but apparently when you start walking a road, it begins to curve and bend into the most unexpected of places, often to where you need to be rather than where you want. In Portugal and Slovakia, I was fortunate to immerse in spaces of learning with people working throughout the world in 'ecoversity' settings or in other 'alternatives' to institutionalized education, or simply practicing a life of learning to be in a world that is aching from globalized systemic violence and normalized oppression, healing from the illusion of modernity, rationality, anthropocentricity, to name a few.

It put me in a place of looking at taghmees in a global context, and only added to my conviction that what we are doing here in the Arab world is pioneering and brave and lively in generating hope in the present. Reef and I constantly find more reasons to love what we're doing, as taghmees touches our lives in a very real way, just as we observe it touching the lives of those around us; those that we know and many that we don't.

Articulating these relations, spaces, and moments of connection, in words is like trying to describe a dance without motion or music without rhythm. No matter how hard you try, how delicate and precise your diction and syntax, they remain absent that fragrance, that taste, that spirit and spark that make them living, breathing, freeing encounters. It is not a process that you can capture and cage, formulate into structures and forms for scaling or duplicating. It cannot be categorized, evaluated, certified, nor can it be denied.

Taghmees is an invitation to live, to embrace a life of living, and to transcend worlds. Such an invitation cannot be made lightly, if not steeped in an abundance of

sincere hospitality, respect, compassion, empathy, humility, vulnerability, and love, the potential for turning each other off is as likely, if not more likely, as drawing each other closer. Wary of merely consuming or accumulating, it is a life of constant questioning, always searching, exploring, experimenting, and producing. Finding what is abundant not what is scarce. Seeking wisdom, ways of knowing, ways of being, and now, ways of becoming. It is a gentle breeze that tickles you, knocks you off your feet, holds you floating, to land, crash, hover, and/or sail. It spreads by catching, infectious like laughter, growing in your gut to rumble through your belly, vibrating across your chest, seizing your throat, tingling in your toes, pulling at your skin, until your entire body and being is shaking, breaking, quaking, spilling out from the hallow of your mouth and bursting through your eyes. When the moment passes, you're left feeling lighter, almost empty, yet overwhelmingly satisfied, content with existing having experienced a morsel of its potential.

Arriving where you need to be, not where you want or plan, is simultaneously wonderful and frustrating, and if you let it be, a most magical and joyous occasion. Thankfully, living taghmees allows me to be present in the present, to sink into the "inexhaustible worlds within worlds within worlds" that exist in every moment, if I only allow myself to let go and enjoy the ride.

> *"It's almost time for me to wiggle my toes and fingers and remember the ground I'm standing on... But tonight I'll have one last night of dreaming with you all so vividly present... And hope to god for the energy we shared to continue vibrating through the earth, directly into the flesh of our entire being."*

Now imagine the place where our many radical worlds collided, mingled, merged, and moved apart. It doesn't have a name, although it was called something. It was a place of us; I was there, and so were you. What is most relevant? That we had to break in order to bond? How often must we come undone in order to grow back? Well, here I go again, for better or for worse, one more time for all of you beautiful people…

Pardon my sense of time, it was both fleeting and endless – hours that felt like seconds joyfully immersed, and others that were like centuries of oppression compressed into frost-tipped shards that slid repeatedly without pause into every fiber of my being. Of course I understand, we are mirrors for and of each other after all, I have been you before and will probably be again, if I am not already, whether in form or in essence, I'll probably never know.

And yes, I was impatient, and likely often too patient. There is a certain violence that we exude in trying to enforce peace or keep it; a fresh flick of the whip in failing to recognize the layer upon layer of lashes that appear as fading scars or not at all. In moments of unjust silence, I felt the weight of wielding that whip, and like everyone else, was offered choice(s). It's no wonder I would prefer fantasy or sci-fi as a medium for reflecting this experience, as I feel myself to be that thorn that continues to prick. But even thorns have their purpose, and I prick with love, not to shame or reproach, but because I believe we can, and need, to be/become better.

To honor these wounds is not weakness, nor is it a call for vengeance or more violence. It is merely what remains for hope of *'peace with dignity and justice'*

(a Zapatista framing that I learned and hold dear)–many of the dead have long died, but still more others join them, with every passing breath countless more death, while the earth continues to be ripped open and raped. To deny this is to close our eyes rather than open them. To close our eyes is not to re-imagine, it is to reiterate our construction and repeat the same mistakes, while condemning others and congratulating ourselves. Simply naming a thing is not removing ourselves from it, rising above it, or moving beyond it. The danger remains, perhaps more strongly now, having lulled ourselves into believing that we are no longer subject to the illusive clutches of the beast. It is still there, residing within us, in the recesses of our consoled souls, reflected in our words, actions, reactions, explanations, and justifications. Echoing Vanessa's sentiment, how do we recognize the pathetic and cute monster within ourselves, embrace them and allow the space to make new mistakes to learn from? Using her metaphor of death and rebirth: How do we hospice the death of this hegemonic modern capitalist imperialist patriarchal system and midwife the birth of a child of rape?

Forgive me, I forget that when I speak like this it may be largely foreboding if not straight up depressing, and I don't mean to be a joy kill or to dash hope. There is a certain immunity that may exist for some that doesn't yet for others, possibly due to lack of exposure, existing in places of low-intensity war, as Manolo phrased it. Buffered from the violence, one is also shielded from the abundance of hope, joy, and life that thrives where the struggle is strongest. Like children who were never allowed to play outside or with others for fear of germs, prevented from climbing trees for fear of falling. Life is a culmination of scrapes, bruises, and runny noses, and the rush of falling is like flying before you meet the ground.

How do we strengthening our immunity then? I believe it is possible, and likely more enjoyable than our rational fears would have us believe. We experienced it, sharing song, dance, and laughter, walking barefoot on the earth, rolling our bodies, caressing poles, disrupting with a single word or many, connecting, feeling, trusting, crying, celebrating, jazzing, being, becoming. Perhaps (or not perhaps) we needed more play, more movement and less words; a need that was expressed repeatedly by some, yet often pushed aside or postponed. It felt more extracurricular, possibly because we're taught to see such things as secondary, falling in the category of entertainment rather than education, forgetting that they are foundational in realm of living, loving, and learning.

And yes, we hurt each other in the process, likely without intention, but nevertheless remains a matter that needs attention. Never having to apologize can too easily lead to never having to recognize when you hurt or when you're hurting. How do we heal then? How do we recognize the violence we inflict without knowing or intending, whether across culture or across species, extended to the animate and inanimate? How do we learn to stop inflicting pain?

How is it that I can say so much and feel like I haven't said anything at all? There was so much happening in every moment, I've barely begun to touch it and I find myself sinking. But that's what it's like to fall in love, and just like Neal wanted, that's all I could have hoped for or needed for practical solidarity, whether to give it or receive it. This is not a possessive love, nor is it transactional or something either you or I must invest in; like the earth, it keeps giving with abundance regardless of our neglect. As opposed to free love, this is more of a freeing love, the kind that gives me a deep appreciation

for the past and greater hope for the future in the present. To know you exist, to share your struggle, to feel you share mine, to have you as a part of my story and to be a part of yours, are gifts as precious as any I have received.

What is a good relationship if not one formed from struggle, riddled with tension, strained, sustained, nurtured, held? Like bones broken, when finally mended, growing back stronger than before.

But I have known you, from a time unimagined; I just had not met you yet. I don't honestly know how far away you are in terms of distance or how long since we first met and last said farewell, but you are constantly with me, if only some times buried deeper than others.

A MEDLEY ON 'SPIRITUALITY'

She said, *"All I need to do is look up and see the sun to know that god exists,"* and my spirit exhaled into the sunlight and was set free.
We are all blessed, but it's easy to forget, even for those who are groundkeepers in paradise. *"I want you to take a deep breath of some fresh fragranced air and just feel the joy of it in every fiber of your being and don't forget to be thankful… This is why we struggle; paradise was everywhere before we forgot."*

Morsel of Blackfoot wisdom: *"Knowledge is not 'discovered'*, it transfers through people and nature…. Humans are new in this world, and need to learn from beings that came before."

"Even the rocks are zapatismo… everything is alive."
[*"So you see, don't judge the way other people connect to God,"* concluded Shams. *"To each his own way and his own prayer. God does not take us at our word. He looks deep into our hearts. It is not the ceremonies or rituals that make a difference, but whether our hearts are sufficiently pure or not."*]

When asked if only one monotheistic god exists, she responds, *"Of course, yes, one god exists"*. When asked about all the other gods, and if they exist, *"Why, of course yes, they all exist"*. There is no contradiction, just a plurality in perception, and an ability to hold all worlds in one breath.

much love to you all,
Dina

Dina Bataineh is the co-founder of Taghmees (www.taghmees.org) – or 'Social Kitchen'–a public community learning experience and an enterprise for strengthening home-based economies. The name refers to a traditional Arab way of eating, which involves bread and dips. It also reflects the idea behind the initiative: 'to immerse oneself deeply into … a discussion, an experience, or life'. Taghmees is designed to reclaim learning spaces by gathering participants, referred to as 'family members', and encouraging them to engage and critically reflect on issues while eating together.



Educated Hope in Dark Times: The Challenge of the Educator/Artist as a Public Intellectual

Henry Giroux

The original text, here re-adapted to fit space constraints, can be found in its entirety at artseverywhere.ca
ed.: Jaroslav Andel

Increasingly, neoliberal regimes across Europe and North America have waged a major assault on critical pedagogy, public pedagogy, and the public spheres in which they take place. Public and higher education are being defunded, turned into accountability factories, and now largely serve as adjuncts of an instrumental logic that mimics the values of the market. But, of course, this is not only true for spaces in which formal schooling takes place, it is also true for those public spheres and cultural apparatuses actively engaged in producing knowledge, values, subjectivities, and identities through a range of media and sites. (…) Pedagogy can be dangerous because it holds the potential for not only creating critically engaged students, intellectuals, and artists but can strengthen and expand the capacity of the imagination to think otherwise in order to act otherwise, hold power accountable, and imagine the unimaginable.

Reclaiming pedagogy as a form of educated and militant hope begins with the crucial recognition that education is not solely about job training and the production of ethically challenged entrepreneurial subjects and that artistic production does not only have to serve market interests, but are also about matters of civic engagement and literacy, critical thinking, and the capacity for democratic agency, action, and change.

It is also inextricably connected to the related issues of power, inclusion, and social responsibility.[1] If young people, artists, and other cultural workers are to develop a deep respect for others, a keen sense of the common good, as well as an informed notion of community engagement, pedagogy must be viewed as a cultural, political, and moral force that provides the knowledge, values, and social relations to make such democratic practices possible. In this instance, pedagogy needs to be rigorous, self-reflective, and committed not to the dead zone of instrumental rationality but to the practice of freedom and liberation for the most vulnerable and oppressed, to a critical sensibility capable of advancing the parameters of knowledge, addressing crucial social issues, and connecting private troubles into public issues. (…)

Pedagogies of repression do more than impose punishing forms of discipline on students and deaden their ability to think critically, they also further a modern-day pandemic of loneliness and alienation. Such pedagogies emphasize aggressive competition, unchecked individualism, and cancel out empathy for an exaggerated notion of self-interest. (…)

At stake here is the need for artists, educators, and others to create pedagogical practices that create militant dreamers, people capable of envisioning a more just

[1]
On this issue, see Henry A. Giroux, Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education(Chicago: Haymarket Press, 2014); Susan Searls Giroux, "On the Civic Function of Intellectuals Today," in Gary Olson and Lynn Worsham, eds. Education as Civic Engagement: Toward a More Democratic Society (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), pp. ix-xvii.

and democratic world and are willing to struggle for it. In this instance, pedagogy becomes not only central to politics but also a practice dedicated to creating a sense of belonging, community, empathy, and practices that address changing the way people think and navigate conflicts emotionally—practices that awaken passion and energize forms of identification that speak to the conditions in which people find themselves. (…)

Domination is at its most powerful when its mechanisms of control and subjugation hide in the discourses of common sense, and its elements of power are made to appear invisible. (…) But power is not just a theoretical abstraction, it shapes the spaces in which everyday life takes place and touches peoples' lives at multiple registers, all of which represent in part a struggle over their identities, values, and views of others and the larger world.

Critical pedagogy must be meaningful in order to be critical and transformative. That is, it should be cosmopolitan and imaginative—a public affirming pedagogy that demands a critical and engaged interaction with the world we live in, mediated by a responsibility for challenging structures of domination and for alleviating human suffering. This is a pedagogy that addresses the needs of multiple publics. As an ethical and political practice, a public pedagogy of wakefulness rejects modes of education removed from political or social concerns, divorced from history and matters of injury and injustice. This is a pedagogy that includes *"lifting complex ideas into the public space,"* recognizing human injury inside and outside of the academy and using theory as a form of criticism to change things.[2] This is a pedagogy in which artists, educators, and other cultural workers are neither afraid of controversy nor a willingness to make connections between private issues and broader elements of society's problems that are otherwise hidden. Nor are they afraid of using their work to address the challenges of the day.

[2] Edward Said, Out of Place: A Memoir (New York: Vintage, 2000) p. 7.

As the practice of freedom, critical pedagogy arises from the conviction that artists, educators and other cultural workers have a responsibility to unsettle power, trouble consensus, and challenge common sense.

(…)
Pedagogy is always the outcome of struggles, especially in terms of how pedagogical practices produce particular notions of citizenship and an inclusive democracy. Pedagogy looms large in this instance not as a technique or a priori set of methods but as a political and moral practice. As a political practice, pedagogy illuminates the relationship among power, knowledge, and ideology, while self-consciously, if not self-critically, recognizing the role it plays as a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within particular sets of social relations. As a moral practice, pedagogy recognizes that what cultural workers, artists, activists, media workers and others teach cannot be abstracted from what it means to invest in public life, presuppose some notion of the future, or locate oneself in a public discourse.

The moral implications of pedagogy also suggest that our responsibilities as cultural workers cannot be separated from the consequences of the knowledge we produce, the social relations we legitimate, and the ideologies and identities we offer up to students.Refusing to decouple politics from pedagogy means, in part, that teaching in classrooms or in any other public sphere should not only simply honor the experiences people bring to such sites, including the classroom, but should

also connect their experiences to specific problems that emanate from the material contexts of their everyday life.

Pedagogy in this sense becomes performative in that it is about situating politics itself within a broader set of relations that addresses what it might mean to create modes of individual and social agency that enables rather than shuts down democratic values, practices, and social relations. Such a project recognizes not only the political nature of pedagogy, but also situates it within a call for artists, intellectuals, and others to assume responsibility for their actions, to link their teachings to those moral principles that allow us to do something about human suffering, as Susan Sontag once suggested.[3] Part of this task necessitates that cultural workers anchor their own work, however diverse, in a radical project that seriously engages the promise of an unrealized democracy against its really existing and radically incomplete forms. Of crucial importance to such a project is rejecting the assumption that theory can understand social problems without contesting their appearance in public life. Yet, any viable cultural politics needs a socially committed notion of injustice if we are to take seriously what it means to fight for the idea of good society.

(…) At stake here is the task, as Jacques Derrida insists, of viewing the project of democracy as a promise, a possibility rooted in an ongoing struggle for economic, cultural, and social justice.[4] Democracy in this instance is not a sutured or formalistic regime, it is the site of struggle itself. The struggle over creating an inclusive and just democracy can take many forms, offers no political guarantees, and provides an important normative dimension to politics as an ongoing process of democratization that never ends. (…)

[3]
Susan Sontag, "Courage and Resistance," The Nation (May 5, 2003), pp. 11-14.

[4]
Jacques Derrida, "Intellectual Courage: An Interview," trans. Peter Krapp, Culture Machine, Volume 2 (2000), pp. 1-15.

Theorists such as Raymond Williams and Cornelius Castoriadis recognized that the crisis of democracy was not only about the crisis of culture but also the crisis of pedagogy and education. Cultural workers would do well to take account of the profound transformations taking place in the public sphere and reclaim pedagogy as a central category of politics itself. Pierre Bourdieu was right when he stated that cultural workers have too often *"underestimated the symbolic and pedagogical dimensions of struggle and have not always forged appropriate weapons to fight on this front."*[5] He goes on to say in a later conversation with Gunter Grass that *"left intellectuals must recognize that the most important forms of domination are not only economic but also intellectual and pedagogical, and lie on the side of belief and persuasion. Important to recognize that intellectuals bear an enormous responsibility for challenging this form of domination."*[6] These are important pedagogical interventions and imply rightly that critical pedagogy in the broadest sense is not just about understanding, however critical, but also provides the conditions, ideals, and practices necessary for assuming the responsibilities we have as citizens to expose human misery and to eliminate the conditions that produce it.

Matters of responsibility, social action, and political intervention do not simply develop out of social critique but also forms of self-critique. The relationship between knowledge and power, on the one hand, and creativity and politics, on the other, should always be self-reflexive about its effects, how it relates to the larger world, whether or not it is open to new understandings, and what it might mean pedagogically to take seriously matters of individual and social responsibility. In short, this project points to the need for cultural workers to address

[5]
Pierre Bourdieu, Acts of Resistance (New York: Free Press, 1998), p. 11.

[6]
Pierre Bourdieu and Gunter Grass, "The 'Progressive' Restoration: A Franco-German Dialogue," New Left Review 14 (March-April, 2002), P. 2

critical pedagogy not only as a mode of educated hope and a crucial element of an insurrectional educational project, but also as a practice that addresses the possibility of interpretation as intervention in the world. (…)
For artists and educators to be voiceless, renounce the knowledge that gives them a sense of authority, and to assume that a wider public does not need to be exposed to modes of knowledge, histories, and values outside of their immediate experience is to forget that pedagogy is always about the struggle over knowledge, desire, identity, values, agency, and a vision of the future. Critical pedagogy for public intellectuals must always be attentive to addressing the democratic potential of engaging how experience, knowledge, and power are shaped in the classroom in different and often unequal contexts, and how teacher authority might be mobilized against dominant pedagogical practices as part of the practice of freedom, particularly those practices that erase any trace of subaltern histories, historical legacies of class struggles, and the ever persistent historical traces and current structures of racial and gender inequalities and injustices. In this sense, teacher authority must be linked both to a never-ending sense of historical memory, existing inequities, and a *"hopeful version of democracy where the outcome is a more just, equitable society that works toward the end of oppression and suffering of all."*
As I have said:

> *Authority in this perspective is not simply on the side of oppression, but is used to intervene and shape the space of teaching and learning to provide students with a range of possibilities for challenging a society's commonsense assumptions, and for analyzing the interface between their own everyday lives and those broader social formations that bear down on them. (...)*

Any viable understanding of the artist and educator as a public intellectual must begin with the recognition that democracy begins to fail and civic life becomes impoverished when pedagogy is no longer viewed as central to politics. This is clearly the case as made visible in the election of Donald Trump to the presidency. Trump's claim that he loves the uneducated appears to have paid off for him just as his victory makes clear that ignorance rather than reason, emotion rather than informed judgment, and the threat of violence rather than critical exchange appear to have more currency in the age of Trump. In part, this political tragedy signifies the failure of the USA public to recognize the educative nature of how agency is constructed, to address the necessity for moral witnessing, and the need to create a formative culture that produces critically engaged and socially responsible citizens. Such a failure empties democracy of any meaning. Such actions represent more than a flight from political and social responsibility; they also represent a surrender to the dark forces of authoritarianism.

(…). Public values, trust, solidarities, and modes of education are under siege. As such, the discourses of hate, humiliation, rabid self-interest, and greed are exercising a poisonous influence in many Western societies. This is most evident at the present moment in the discourse of the right-wing extremists vying to consolidate their authority within a Trump presidency, all of whom sanction a war on immigrants, women, young people, poor Black youth, and so it goes. Under such circumstances, democracy is on life support. Yet rather than being a rationale for cynicism, radical democracy as both a pedagogical project and unfinished ideal should create an individual and collective sense of moral and political outrage, a new understanding of politics, and the pedagogical projects needed to allow democracy to breathe once again.

Trump's presence in US politics has made visible a plague of deep-seated civic illiteracy, a corrupt political system, and a contempt for reason; it also points to the withering of civic attachments, the collapse of politics into the spectacle of celebrity culture, the decline of public life, the use of violence and fear to numb people into shock, and a willingness to transform politics into a pathology. Trump's administration will produce a great deal of violence in American society, particularly among the ranks of the most vulnerable: poor children, minorities of color, immigrants, women, climate change advocates, Muslims, and those protesting a Trump presidency. What must be made clear is that Trump's election and the damage he will do to American society will stay and fester for quite some time because he is only symptomatic of the darker forces that have been smoldering in American politics for the last 40 years. What cannot be exaggerated or easily dismissed is that Trump is the end result of a longstanding series of attacks on democracy and that his presence in the American political landscape has put democracy on trial. This is a challenge that artists, educators, and others must address. While mass civil demonstrations have and continue to erupt over Trump's election, what is more crucial to understand is that something more serious needs to be addressed. We have to acknowledge that at this particular moment in American history the real issue is not simply about resisting Donald Trump's insidious values and anti-democratic policies but whether a political system can be reclaimed in which democracy is not on trial but is deepened, strengthened and sustained. This will not happen unless new modes of representation challenge the aesthetics, culture, and discourse of neo-fascism. Yet, under a Trump presidency, it will be more difficult to sustain, construct, and nurture those public spheres that sustain critique, informed dialogue, and a work to expand the radical imagination. (…) If the authoritarianism of the Trump era is to be challenged, it must begin with a politics that is comprehensive in its attempts to understand the intersectionality of diverse forces of oppression and resistance. That is, on the one hand, it must move towards developing analyses that address the existing state of authoritarianism through a totalizing lens that brings together the diverse registers of oppression and how they are both connected and mutually reinforce each other. On the other hand, such a politics must, as Robin D.G. Kelley has noted, *"move beyond stopgap alliances"* **[7]** and work to unite single issue movements into a more comprehensive and broad-based social movement that can make a viable claim to a resistance that is as integrated as it is powerful.

(…) People also internalize oppression and that domination is about not only the crisis of economics, images that deaden the imagination, and the misrepresentation of reality, but also about the crisis of agency, identification, meaning, and desire. The crisis of economics and politics in the Trump era has not been matched by a crisis of consciousness and agency. The failure to develop a crisis of consciousness is deeply rooted in a society that suffers from a plague of atomization, loneliness, and despair. Neoliberalism has undermined any democratic understanding of freedom, limiting its meaning to the dictates of consumerism, hatred of government, and a politics in which the personal is the only emotional referent that matters. Freedom has collapsed into the dark abyss of a vapid and unchecked individualism and in doing so has cancelled out that capacious notion of freedom rooted in bonds of solidarity, compassion, social responsibility, and the bonds of social obligations.

[7]
Robin D. G. Kelley, "After Trump," Boston Review (November 15, 2016).

The toxic neoliberal combination of unchecked economic growth and its discourse of plundering the earth's resources, coupled with a rabid individualism marked largely by its pathological disdain for community and public values, has weakened democratic pressures, values, and social relations and opened the door for the election of Donald Trump to the American Presidency. This collapse of democratic politics points to an absence in progressive movements and among various types of public intellectuals about how to address the importance of emotional connections among the masses, take seriously how to connect with others through pedagogical tools that demand respect, empathy, a willingness to listen to other stories, and to think seriously about how to change consciousness as an educative task. The latter is particularly important because it speaks to the necessity to politically address the challenge of awakening modes of identification coupled with the use of language not merely to demystify but to persuade people that the issues that matter have something to do with their lived realities and daily lives.

Pressing the claim for economic and political justice means working hard to develop alternative modes of consciousness, promote the proliferation of democratic public spheres, create the conditions for modes of mass resistance, and make the development of sustainable social movements central to any viable struggle for economic, political, and social justice.

No viable democracy can exist without citizens who value and are willing to work towards the common good. That is as much a pedagogical question as it is a political challenge.

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American and Canadian scholar and cultural critic.
One of the founding theorists of critical pedagogy in the United States, he is best known for his pioneering work in public pedagogy, cultural studies, youth studies, higher education, media studies, and critical theory. In 2002 Routledge named Giroux as one of the top fifty educational thinkers of the modern period

Multi-layered Selves: Colonialism, Decolonization and Counter-Intuitive Learning Spaces

Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti

As I wondered about the best way to write this text, two related events caught my attention. First, I received a call for publications with the title “After De-colonizing…What?” issued after an extremely productive (albeit difficult) 2015 gathering in Portugal on the theme of ‘Eco-versities’. In the same week, in a different context, I was gifted a wooden USB stick with the word ‘decolonized’ hand stamped on it. Both events attest to the fact that the word decolonization is becoming a popular way to describe changes people want to see in society.

Different people use the word to name changes in processes, thinking or institutions that they feel are unjust or are causing harm to themselves or others. Therefore, decolonization has come to mean many different things in different contexts, and, although this is to be expected, Indigenous scholars have taken issue with certain uses of the term [i]. In any case, it is very important to ask questions about what assumptions, politics, and theories of change inform the analysis of colonization and the invocation and desire for decolonization in each context of use.

For example, in the first event I mentioned, the question “After De-colonizing…What?” can be interpreted by assuming a number of things; for instance, that there is consensus about what colonialism is, what it has done, how it is reproduced, who and where we are within it, how things could change, and when it is over. It seems to assume that decolonization can be a point in time (e.g. I was colonized, now I am decolonized), rather than a lifelong and life-wide process. It seems to assume that we can — and that it is desirable — to articulate and determine what comes after decolonization even before decolonization can happen. And it also seems to suggest that the question itself is located in an already decolonized space, that colonialism is not at work in the question itself, and that it is “time to move on” to more “concrete” things rather than keep on discussing the problems “of the past.” What the question does not convey is that there are very different understandings of colonial violence, of what the job of decolonization is, and of what it takes to get the job done.

In the same way, the “Decolonized” USB stick mentioned before works as an icon of past and present colonization while, ironically, announcing its end. On the one hand, it represents an attempt to raise awareness about the endurance of colonialism; it attests to the fact that colonialism is not something that happened in the past, and that there is a need to decolonize “today.” On the other hand, despite using critical language, the USB stick can be interpreted as supporting a colonial economy and way of being, while giving us the stamp of approval we are taught to seek and to consume. Symbolically, it turns

[i] See for example Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang “Decolonization is not a metaphor”

decolonization into a brand literally stamped into the wood structure of the stick, associating it with ideas of sustainability and activism mediated by an individualist consumerist techno-culture (that, some would argue, represents colonialism itself). It feeds and is fed by our desires to look, feel and be seen as doing "good", especially on our Facebook profiles and Twitter feeds, while the business of colonization goes on as usual.

I have tried to imagine scenarios that could have made the message stamped on the USB stick seem reasonable. The manufacturer could have used electronic materials and manufacturing processes not associated with exploited labour, dispossession, destitution, and unsustainable extraction in its production. The files stored in the USB stick could have been developed using open source software and contain everything we need to know about living "off the grid." The USB could have been laden with a Trojan horse virus that will put a halt to a destructive global economy or reveal data that would compel us to look for different ways of co-existing on the planet. This could be a magic stick that could erase our colonial history or make people not be attracted to consumption. The files could have been created to help us question whether meeting any or all of the criteria described so far would merit the stamp "decolonized." The USB stick illustrates that, if driven by aspirations for innocence, decolonization is also a colonial desire.

DIFFICULT LEARNING

Both events indicate that creating learning spaces that require us to move beyond the desire for self-affirmation and engage in difficult, complex, and agonistic conversations is not easy. We tend to want change to happen on terms that do not jeopardize our perceived entitlements, securities and self-images. For example, we may claim we have been "enlightened" in one breath and in the next, reproduce a colonial violence, finally feeling defensive when someone points that out. This is particularly difficult for those of us who are engaged in various forms of activism, critique, and alternative practices, as we would like to be seen as the ones who have risen above the colonial imaginary, becoming the role models of decolonization and able to teach others about it.

We enter debates to "win," using moral high grounds, self-righteousness, or even self-blame to re-center ourselves in the struggle for voice and for the power to (continue to) define the direction of the process. The claim of awareness of oppression becomes a claim to innocence that re-centers the needs, entitlements and investments of those who are claiming it. We may even say we want to learn from discomfort, but when it actually happens, when we lose epistemic privilege, we feel wronged and fight to re-gain that privilege again.

When we protect our personal and collective investments and perceived entitlements, we tend to project our expectations of outcomes and outputs, and when these expectations are not met, we get upset and frustrated with those who got "in the way." We have been taught to seek consensus and validation and to resent the productive discomfort of learning from dissent. We tend to overlook the complexities and paradoxes in our contexts, as well as our own contradictions. We tend to polarize, to antagonize, to vilify, to victimize, and to romanticize, looking for a moral space beyond critique for those with whom we identify and ourselves. In this context of mistrust, struggle for power, and protection of perceived entitlements, it is difficult to disagree without hurting each other. And since vulnerabilities are not evenly distributed, it is important to remember that people born into non-normative bodies are often (again) made responsible

for a heavier load of work in spaces for difficult learning. So, where do we go from here? Facing the magnitude of the task of enabling a world without colonial relations requires more than a change of narratives, convictions or identities. It requires an interruption of harmful desires hidden behind promises of entitlements and securities that people hold on to, particularly when they are afraid of each other and of scarcity. It requires listening without projecting our ideas of ends and means. In order to take us to the point where we really want to exist differently, we need new, provisional and transitional frames that can help our conversations move in different ways without over-determining its direction: like a bridge that should not be confused with the path itself, which is foggy and does not give us a clear picture of the horizon. These frames should take us to the edge of what is intelligible to us, they should help us de-center, disarm, discern and disinvest in harmful practices and desires. Sitting at that edge, we can look differently at what has sustained us so far, notice the ways in which these things prevent us from 'being' differently, and, perhaps, accept an invitation towards what, right now, may seem impossible.

Art can do this. The story I share next attempts to do the same. In proposing a transitional frame, it invites us to move from epistemic certainty (knowing through fixed categories), to epistemic reflexivity (tracing the origins and limits of knowing), then, perhaps, to (onto) epistemic openness (experimenting with other possibilities for being/knowing without grafting them into what we are familiar with). It asks us to consider colonization and decolonization, care and responsibility across four different realms of existence; four different ways we can experience 'being'; four different layers of 'sensing' the world, acknowledging the limitations of 'sense-making' in each layer.

The first layer is where "I" experiences the world as "me". "I" exists in a temporal and temporary body, with a unique chemistry and physiology, responding to the world from a particular dynamic constellation of affects, desires and narratives that are grounded on particular collective ideas of what is real, knowable, and ideal. The second layer is where "I" experiences the world through the interface between "me and you": the in-between spaces and collective imaginaries of common territories, causes, identities, ideologies, and struggles. In this layer, multiple senses and languages are used to negotiate boundaries, belongings, alliances, communities and collectivities. In both layers, "I" is an individual, is separate, but is also interconnected with others.

So far, so good. We are used to these two layers: They are the DNA of our modern institutions and forms of subjectivity. Through our socialization and education, these modern institutions place a grid of meanings, relational practices, sensibilities and aspirations upon these two layers. For example, in our modern experience of these two layers, it is "common sense" to place human agency and cognition at the centre of the world. Therefore, it makes sense to try to engineer identities and societies in the same way that we engineer airplanes. It makes sense to see individuals, institutions and communities as independent, autonomous and sovereign entities. It makes sense to expect human knowledge to drive human evolution. It makes sense to evoke individual or communal interests to create different types of economies. It makes sense to treat the environment as a resource at the disposal of human progress. It makes sense to rely on moral reason to decide how nations should be organized, how we should live together and how cultures should be ranked according to their stage of modern development. It makes sense to identify and eliminate

‘evil’. It makes sense to promise security, prosperity and progress for all through bordered nations, un-bordered capital, and techno-scientific utopias.

(If you are reading this text [using the technology of alphabetic literacy], this must be all very familiar. However, the next layers problematize and set limits to the very act of sense making. As such, they require a stretch of the modern imagination beyond its sensorial and cognitive limits; please bear with me.)

The third layer is where “I” recognizes that her skin does not delimit her body: that the skin is just the outer coating of a body-organ that belongs to a larger conscious body that cannot be known, apprehended or controlled. “I” recognizes that flesh extends beyond the human form and linear time to the air, the land, the sky and everything else around her. This is where “I” recognizes that there is “me in you”: that my body is made of other bodies, that the same stuff that makes my body makes your body too, and that the force that animates all these processes and bodies is one and the same. In this layer, “I” sensorially recognizes that we are all viscerally connected: viscerally in the sense that we are part of the same metabolism, that the joy, pain, shame, survival and well being of this collective body affects everything and everyone. Since “I” realizes that she carries the whole spectrum of human ills and wonders within her, she feels infinitely responsible for her participation in balancing this system, and for the well being of fellow participants. In this layer, “flesh”, broadly conceptualized, seamlessly connects everything: I am not separate, I am interwoven. The fourth layer is where “I” disappears in formlessness, beyond time and space, beyond materiality, experience, or human consciousness. “I” realizes that it also exists in “nothingness”, in the mystery of pure energy and possibility: “I” is also the very formless force that creates everything. In this layer, there is “neither me nor you” and there is all of it at the same time: “I” is one, two, many, all, and none.

The first and second layers are layers of separability, the third and fourth, of entanglement. Depending on which layer we are operating from at any minute of the day, our relationships to thinking and knowledge can be very different. The first and second layers tend to be oriented towards practicalities of time and space, towards what is known through experience, has been tested and can be predicted with some level of success. In the grid of modernity, in the first two layers, we are socialized to equate thinking with reasoning grounded on separability. The third layer tends to be oriented towards the weaving of relationships, seeing one’s well being as implicated in another’s as we see ourselves as part of each other. In this layer, we feel each other’s pains, we also feel the pain of the land and any harm done to another is sensed as harm done to oneself. In this layer, reasoning is not only thinking, but sensorial perceptions: we “reason” with multiple organs in multiple spaces.

The fourth layer, the realm of vision and dreaming, is the one that can be accessed intentionally by altered states of consciousness that take us beyond embodiment, space and time. This kind of reasoning often demands practices of discipline and restraint. These practices require individual intellects and identities to be bracketed for sensorial openings to experiences not constrained by normalized rationalizations of self and of the world. Although we see very differently within different layers, we can’t think our way out of a layer into another. The move between layers is not about more advanced thinking, but about a shift of locus (or frequency) of being.

BACK to COLONIALISM

Colonialism is a systemic force inseparable from our modern desires for property, security, control, choice, comfort, affluence, autonomy, and/or progress. It furtively manifests itself even when we are critical of it and when we say we are working against it. Colonization is a theft of layers, an impairment of being where entanglement cannot be sensed or recognized. Within these fences, care and responsibility are dependent on convictions. In practice, these convictions become moral-utilitarian personal choices that are mobilized to affirm colonial relationships and subjectivities, disguised as moral and benevolent behaviour. Colonization strips care and responsibility away from the visceral command that operates before will, a visceral command that is not a rational choice.

There are at least three inter-related dimensions of colonialism. The cognitive dimension of colonialism traps our imagination into singularities, especially a single story of progress, development and human evolution. This entrapment generates epistemic violence and "epistemicide" eliminating other possibilities of knowing/being. The political/economic dimension can be represented as a dynamic grid of inter-locked meanings, aspirations and relational and organizational practices sustained by exploitation, expropriation and destitution. The grid hides the harmful costs and destructive force of its architecture by giving us a deceptive sense of freedom, innocence and autonomy, and by promising unlimited possibilities for knowledge and justice, while severely restricting what seems realistic, desirable, tangible and intelligible. The existential dimension of colonialism manifests as a denial of unbound relationships [ii], fencing our sense of self and community within layers of separability ("me" and, at best, "me and you"). This denial is rationalized through notions of civilization, superiority and/or exceptionality. It generates indifference, de-humanization, and ultimately, can justify genocide.

Tackling all three dimensions of colonialism together results in forms of resistance that are unintelligible within the grid. Similarly, attempting to undo it exclusively through the first two layers of separability results in paradoxical forms of resistance. This is because colonialism: (a) is rationalized as normal, just, and benevolent; (b) is clever, flexible, and adaptive, (c) is insidious, endemic, seductive, and "delicious" (when we are benefitting from it while foreclosing its costs); and (d) it co-opts resistance by over-coding our senses, our ideas of self, our desires, our perceived entitlements, our treasured securities, our possibilities for relationships, going far beyond just defining our "thinking". Therefore, deeper analyses and shifts of convictions can help in our understanding of it, but ultimately, we cannot simply rationalize our way out of colonialism: when we declare we have achieved "decolonization," we are often doing that from a standpoint enabled and sustained by colonialism itself. Our disenchantment with colonialism does not translate into disillusionment with or disinvestment in it. This is partly because, in the first two layers, we don't know how to exist outside of it, and we are afraid of being "paralysed" by the process, afraid of the loss of epistemic and agentic privilege that colonialism provides, afraid of the loss of our sense of bounded individuality and community, afraid of life beyond the fences. Within the existential fences of colonialism we tend to believe we are autonomous individuals that relate to the world through our thinking and knowledge alone. Language and knowledge cast a net of categorical boxes that capture and rank entities in the world around us, according to the grid. These boxes deprive us from experiencing relationships not mediated by meaning.

[ii] See Dwayne Donald's "Forts, curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage: Imagining decolonization of Aboriginal-Canadian relations in educational contexts"

We get sick within the fences of separability and bored with the categorical boxes, but we can only imagine and desire change within the grid itself: we want different content in the boxes without changing their frames, we want change that is recognizable, affirming and familiar; like saying you want change, but thinking only about a change of clothes: something lighter or warmer, trendier or easier to wash. Only those who have torn their clothes themselves are ready to strip down naked.

DECOLONIZATION

Changing frames and fences can be very uncomfortable, since it demands cleaning up, stepping up and growing up. This involves being present (to the collective pain), remaining in resonance (with the call for responsibility), practicing release (of attachments to boxes, false promises and perceived entitlements), and keeping ourselves in balance (with truck loads of patience, humility, compassion, generosity and radical tenderness [iii]). Who would choose to do this? Or . . . can we afford to continue not to?

Jacqui Alexander [iv] refers to the colonial enforcement of separability as a process of dismemberment. This dismemberment happens both at physical and psychic levels. She says that we all feel a yearning for wholeness (which we can find in the third layer), but that we confuse this (in the second layer) with a yearning to 'belong'. The focus on belonging then makes us build more fences and make more boxes: of citizenship, of political/cultural/sexual orientation, of struggle, of relationships bound by expectations of convictions and identities in the struggle for power and promised entitlements (for voice, identity, recognition, representation, redistribution). This reproduces the very dismemberment that caused the yearning in the first place. New fences and boxes can give us some temporary respite from perceived (and real) threats, but they unavoidably reproduce the void and sickness of separation. Jacqui states that the yearning for wholeness can only be addressed through "that space of the erotic, that space of the Soul, that space of the Divine" (p. 282), all spaces of merger and entanglement.

From this perspective, decolonization is the process of interrupting the satisfaction we have with the perceived enjoyments, securities and entitlements afforded by colonialism. It cannot be done by merely replacing convictions, issuing apologies, performing tokenistic gestures expecting redemption, affirmation or gratitude, or presuming reconciliation through alliance, inclusion or integration on colonial terms. Decolonization requires an expansion of layers of reasoning, of sensing, of being, of visceral care and responsibility. It is a process of undoing that is initially messy and agonizing as it demands that we confront our fears: of facing sanctioned denials; of confronting our own violence; of being overwhelmed by our collective pain; of having our personal dreams, rights and self-images annihilated as we lose our individual selves and moral high grounds in realizing we are one another. The practice of this kind of visceral relations and responsibilities grounds a form of agonistic politics that finds little use for declared convictions. However, having provisional, transitional and precarious vocabularies that can gesture towards these possibilities may be useful, and that is what this story has tried to accomplish.

COUNTER-INTUITIVE LEARNING SPACES

Rediscovering our capacity to imagine beyond boxes, fences, posturing, certainties, and safety blankets, requires different questions and different vocabularies anchored in the uncertainty and precariousness of our entangled collective vulnerabilities. It requires a move

[iii] Inspired by the "Radical Tenderness Manifesto" by Dani D'Emilia with Daniel B. Chavez

[iv] See "Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred", Jacqui Alexander, 2005.

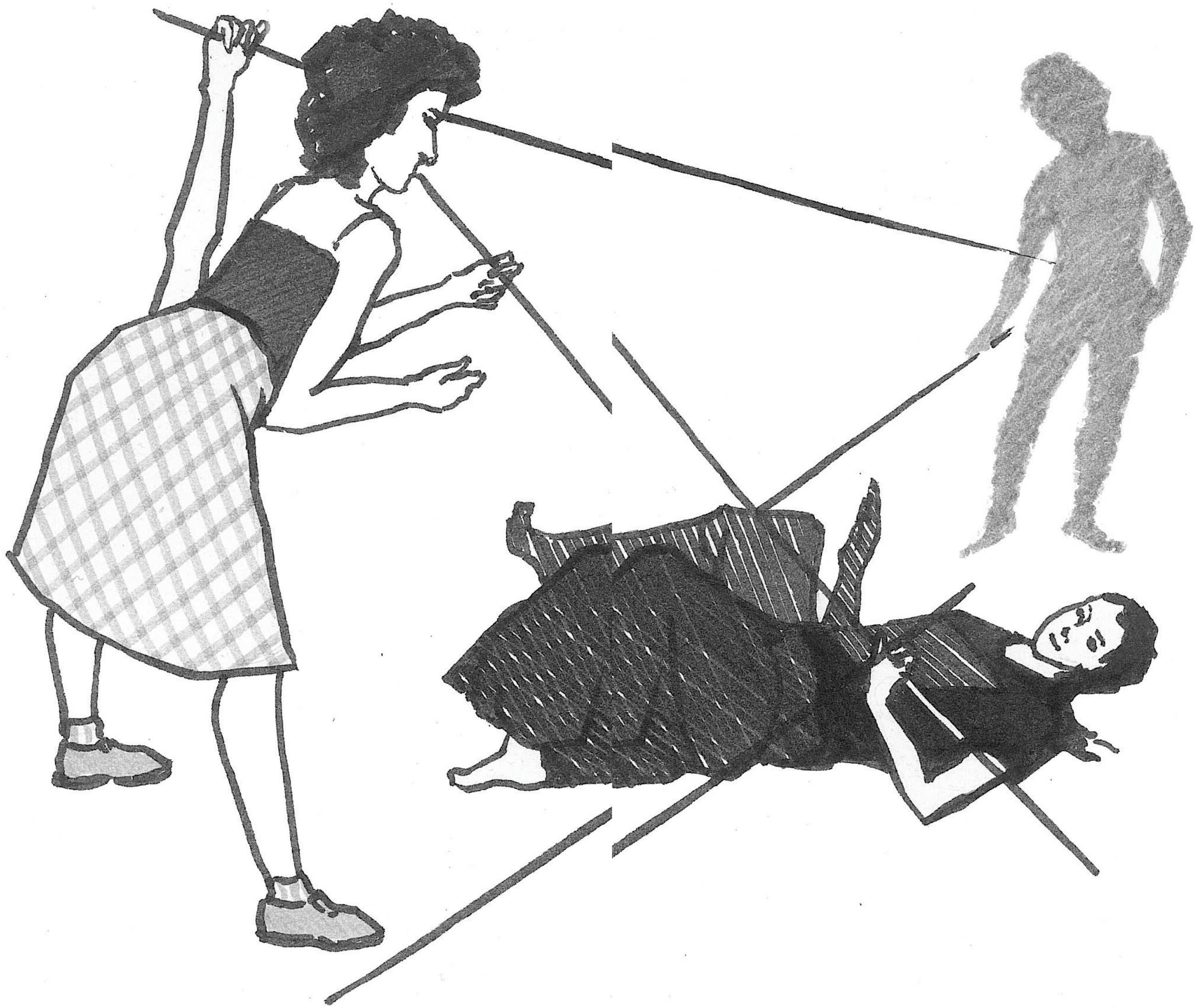
from epistemic certainty (where we hold on to the boxes and fences that sustain colonialism, demanding a language that will "show us the way"), to epistemic reflexivity (where we get disenchanted and, ultimately disillusioned with the false promises and pleasures of our frames and fences), and to a (fleeting) state of onto-epistemic openness (where we experiment with other possibilities for being/knowing without grafting them into what we are familiar with). It is in this state that we learn to align all four layers, and start to perceive ourselves not as eitherseparate or entangled, but as both separate and entangled in a non-dialectical way. In order to do that, changing our relationship to language and knowledge, to boxes and fences, is key: we need to recognize multiple layers of sensing, of reasoning, of knowing, what these layers can do, and how they are all partial and limited, insufficient and indispensible, how they open and/or close possibilities for existence.

Learning spaces that can support this process are counter-intuitive within the grid, as they emphasize the importance of complex existential questions instead of the search for (often simplistic) self-affirming solutions. These spaces prioritize de-centering over leadership; disarmament over empowerment; discernment over conviction; consent over consensus; pluriversality over univocality; and disinvestment over revolution. In these spaces participants are called to recognize that decolonization is a life-long and wide trans-generational multi-dimensional process without guarantees, a process that requires us to keep our eyes, pores, flesh and dreams wide open. These spaces require a commitment to depth of reflection and faith in our capacity to relate, to see ourselves in each other, in ways not mediated by agreements, identities, knowledge or understanding. Within these spaces precarious vocabularies that "refuse" to tell us the "only right way" are key. They can help us to clarify different positions (without ranking them), to trace our thinking back and forth (without (self)censorship), to face our paradoxes and contradictions (without shame), and to develop the stamina to walk together differently, welcoming both uncertainty and indeterminacy, without the option of turning our backs to one another. From the perspective of the first two layers, this will seem impossible to initiate or to achieve.

When I think about the urgencies of decolonization, I often remember that I don't know how young people in my family will survive the inevitable crash of this destructive casino economy. I don't know for how long they might have access to technology, employment, health care, freedom of expression, and/or safe water. I don't know who they will fall in love and have children with. I don't know who their great-grandchildren will be seven generations from now: whether their bodies will be normative, where they will fit in the social hierarchies that might exist in their time, whether they will conform or rebel. I ask myself: Seven generations from now, what will I have been responsible for? What do I need to do right now to nurture the possibility of a viable world for this family? What kind of politics, relationships, language and forms of existence are necessary to enact this inter-generational responsibility? And what if the "family" is not just the people I have blood ties with? What if, beyond notions of linear time, these great-grandchildren are already around me?

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Alternative Institutions and Intimate Counter-Publics: Chto Delat's School for Engaged Art and Rosa's House of Culture

Jonathan Brooks Platt

This essay was first published in Russian translation as "Alternativnye institutsii i intimnaia kontrpublika," in Zachem stanovit'sia khudozhnikom: Opyt Shkoly Vovlechennogo Iskusstva Chto Delat', ed. Dmitrii Vilenskii, trans. Aleksander Skidan (St. Petersburg, 2016).

In the context of contemporary Russian artistic and intellectual life, the significance of the **Chto Delat School for Engaged Art** and **Rosa's House of Culture** is difficult to overstate. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union (and, indeed, during the years of perestroika that preceded it) Russian radical art practices have for the most part been profoundly public and performative in orientation. Whether taking the form of street actions, gallery-based performances, or longer-term social interventions based on research, most recent additions to the canon of Russian art have involved public display or the display of the public, while more contemplative projects have been far rarer. Such practices were bound to take center stage in a society experiencing a deeply contested, epochal transformation, and they showed remarkable longevity. Over the past fifteen years, even as social relations in Russia have become increasingly reified and corporatized, engaged artists have continued to confront the public, demanding to be seen and heard, and insisting on the fundamental malleability of what can be seen and heard. This public orientation has recently become increasingly untenable, and the reasons are not hard to discern. Since the Russian protests of 2011-12 and **Putin**'s controversial election to a third term as president, the state has followed its own path of (pseudo-)radicalization. The Ministry of Culture has declared war on contemporary art (along with other media, particularly theater), enforcing its line on what constitutes an "appropriate" aesthetic statement (i.e., patriotic, heteronormative, accessible, etc.). Mass media outlets have been transformed into a tightly disciplined propaganda machine, combining the ritualized unanimity of late Soviet official culture with a frenzied, fear-mongering spectacularism appropriated from the west. Russian actionism is dead (**Pavlensky** here is the exception that proves the rule); exhibition spaces invariably practice self-censorship (or find themselves overrun by neo-fascist Cossack bands); and artists are more likely to shun the newly mobilized "people" than engage them in social projects.

As one might expect, this situation has forced the leftist art community to turn inward, developing practices of intimacy, and working beneath the radar of state interests. To be sure, artists always used intense forms of intimacy to support earlier traditions of public display,

but those forms largely remained secondary to the work itself. And here the contribution of Chto Delat is particularly important. They have been in the forefront among St. Petersburg artists and intellectuals in resisting any expression of the intimate turn as a simple rejection of the compromised public sphere. On the contrary, they have worked tirelessly to build a viable, alternative institution that can potentially serve as a public platform. And while this goal is decidedly utopian since the inchoate counter-public they would address remains completely marginalized with respect to mainstream officialdom, their project has nonetheless been an undeniable success. The school and the house of culture continue to grow and develop despite serious resistance from both private and state actors. (They have, by my count, been forced to move their operations five different times over the course of only two years.) Hundreds of Petersburg artists, activists, and intellectuals have participated in their activities, not to mention visitors from other Russian and foreign cities. Most importantly, the institution has contributed to the formation of a close-knit network of young artists and intellectuals, who show remarkable group solidarity while pursuing a broad range of activities and focusing on diverse aspects of the leftist agenda.

In current conditions Chto Delat's institutional project represents a more mature and, one hopes, productive form of emancipatory practice than mere public display. The alternative institution does not require direct confrontation to sustain a publicly-oriented position. Instead of hurling itself against the wall that divides it from the hegemonic culture, the institution asserts a public presence, while accepting its — for now — marginal status. Participants are not obsessed with "peak experiences" that guarantee a place in art historical memory. Instead, their work and the cultivation of intimacy it promotes are more subtle and concrete. When involved in such practices — the occupation and inhabitation of collective spaces — the pursuit of long-term, small-scale projects, and the supplementing of direct activism (which has become increasingly difficult) with the production of group solidarity, the temporality of political engagement is doubled, which anticipates a future of active resistance instead of staging provocations in the streets to construct a genuinely emancipatory present that is founded on patient, self-organized, collective labor (a contrast to more radical communities, which typically collapse under the pressure of their own aspirations). The builders of such institutions are thus simultaneously involved in a form of utopian projection — imagining and longing for a viable counter-public — while concretely working to sustain one another here and now, maintaining enthiasm, fidelity, and solidarity through mutual support and collaboration. Here it also worth noting that the Chto Delat school and house of culture are only two projects among many institutional efforts in which members of Chto Delat have being leading participants. Other activities in this vein one include the remarkable work of **Artemy Magun** and, more recently, **Oxana Timofeeva**'s work in developing the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the European University in St. Petersburg. The contributions of Alexander Skidan to numerous projects that promote the current renaissance of Russian avant-garde and political poetry, and **Nikolay Oleynikov**'s design work with **Kirill Medvedev**'s **Free Marxist Press** (not to mention their collaboration in the **Arkady Kots group**, which has itself become a kind of institution now deeply involved with the burgeoning movement of Russian independent trade unions are additional examples. While generationally closer to Chto Delat's students, **Pavel Arsenev**'s **Translit journal** and related publications also emerged from a milieu with close ties to the group.

The options in arts pedagogy in St. Petersburg have always been seriously limited, and the Chto Delat school has quickly positioned itself as a genuine competitor to other institutions in the city. The old Soviet academies remain bastions of conservative aesthetic values with no interest in contemporary trends. Between 2007-2009, the American artist **Emily Newman** worked to establish an accredited MFA program at **Smolny** (the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences, St. Petersburg State University's collaboration with Bard College), but the project was derailed after intense resistance from remnants of the scene that emerged around **Ivan Chechot**'s **Navicula Artis Gallery** in the early 1990s. Testifying to the parochialism and inertia of St. Petersburg's institutional landscape, these entrenched artists and critics protested against the idea of foreign "Varangians" coming to bring new ideas and usurp their power. Since then Smolny has only offered a post-graduate program in art criticism. Among programs closer in size to the Chto Delat school, **Pro Arte**'s school has played an important role in the development of a number of local artists, but it lacks consistency, since it has no permanent faculty (and no clear ideological position). In 2014 a new independent pedagogical project, **Paideia**, began at Pushkinskaya 10, the old perestroika center for non-official culture. However, this program is focused more on theory than practice; it charges tuition; and it only runs for two months. By contrast, the Chto Delat school typically offers a small stipend to its students, and it runs for a full year. The next course is planned to run for a year and a half.

* * *

While the first years of the Chto Delat school have clearly been very successful in terms of building an alternative institution on a bedrock of intimacy, the actual methods of the school, particularly its relation to Chto Delat's own art practice are somewhat controversial. In terms of its philosophy, the school adheres to the traditional leftist paradigm outlined in **Paulo Freire**'s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which, unlike the relatively more recent — and more popular — model of radical equality proposed in **Jacques Rancière**'s *Ignorant Schoolmaster*, still preserves a place for pedagogical authority. Chto Delat clearly sides with Freire in the basic assumption that *"without leadership, discipline, determination, and objectives [...] an organization cannot survive, and revolutionary action is thereby diluted."* The key is to forge a balance—or, more precisely, to sustain a dialectic — between authority and freedom, such that *"no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught."*

The methods Chto Delat uses in pursuit of these ends have been developed over nearly a decade of conducting short-term pedagogical projects. The most prototypical of these are their intensive seminars that culminate in the staging of a "learning play," which the participants write and perform under the direction of **Olga Egorova (Tsaplya)**, who possesses an uncanny ability to unite an unruly collective around a common cause. These plays also make extensive use of the modern dance techniques of **Nina Gasteva**, who describes her area of responsibility as cultivating the group's *"collective body."* While these projects are of course far from Freire's work with the illiterate poor, they can be seen as fostering community and empowerment among the creative workers who participate in them. It hardly needs to be stated that young people interested in forms of labor that do not produce marketable commodities (whether material or immaterial) often live precarious lives and run the risk of slipping into conditions of deep alienation. The blitzkrieg of intimacy Chto Delat brings to these projects, with its

heavy orientation on public performance and politicized speech, provides a tangible form of resistance to such problems.

At the same time, however, Chto Delat's pedagogical method raises a range of questions familiar to readers of **Claire Bishop**'s influential survey of participatory art in *Artificial Hells.* What are the spectatorial implications of such projects? To what extent does a pedagogical art project need to communicate itself to a public beyond the participants themselves? What aesthetic criteria apply to its final outcomes? If the public identifies these outcomes with the artist-organizers, does this objectify the participants as delegated performers? Is the project "mere" art, or is it a real social process?

With their St. Petersburg school, Chto Delat are working to extend their pedagogical practice beyond the feverish tempos of the learning plays and, perhaps most importantly, to bring it back to their home city after years of plying their trade in foreign art contexts. The result has been even greater risk. Since the school emphasizes collective work over individual initiatives, and the organizers choose the central theme for each semester based on their own interests (violence and monumentality were the themes of the school's inaugural year), the students find themselves deeply embedded in Chto Delat's own practice while not directly involved at its uppermost levels. The group makes a constant effort to distinguish between their own work and that of the school, but to an outside observer this can seem somewhat arbitrary. Meanwhile, the student-artists are constantly faced with the task of negotiating their position as individuals with specific ideas, affinities, and goals, as members of a collective working on collaborative projects, and as participants in the Chto Delat platform itself, where they can never be quite sure if they are the beneficiaries of the group's significant symbolic capital, or if they are contributing their energies to help that capital grow.

These conditions have produced some interesting tensions in the work of the school. For example, the learning play the school staged after the first semester, *Faster, Spicier, Tastier!*, was conceived as a protest against the 2014 Sochi Olympics and the conditions of violence they masked in Russian society. The students each took on the role of a vegetable, participating in various "contests," pre-taped and displayed on a projection, which typically involved the intense humiliation of a marginalized subject. The stage was then populated with restaurant guests, who proceeded to devour the vegetables one by one until none remained. While participating in this production, I was struck by the hidden allegorical potentials it suggested in relation to the school itself. If the "vegetables" were seen not only as representative subject positions but also as the young student-artists who embodied them, then the play was also about their own processes of maturation towards a level of "preparedness" (for public consumption), which was being linked to violent death.

A similar tension arose with the film Chto Delat produced after the second semester of the school — now defined specifically as the organizers' work and not that of the students, although most of the actors were recent graduates. The film, *"The Excluded,"* was focused precisely on the marginalization of independent-thinking young people in Russia and the obstacles they face if they aspire to any kind of "heroic" intervention into the social field, which is rapidly descending beyond mere authoritarianism into something frighteningly fascistic. Again the student-artists were put in the position of

embodying a typical class of Russian youth, and it is not surprising that a few of them rebelled, criticizing the film in an open letter for using their *"beautiful, young bodies"* (прекрасные молодые тела) to create the image of a *"single organism"* (один организм), cleansed of all internal contradictions. In other words, the authenticity that the student-artists gave to Chto Delat (as young Russians) pushed them into a position of inauthenticity when it came to their performances as individual subjects. While some might take these tensions as grounds for criticizing the project, I prefer to see them as an articulation of its fundamental question, indeed an articulation that productively straddles the aesthetic and the social. Within the school's bounds the student-artists join the organizers and lecturers in a deeply intimate space of collective labor. Productive antagonisms abound in their discussions and creative work — always the hallmark of Chto Delat's particular model of collectivity. But since the school is also an institution, it must invariably turn outward and face the public as well. At this incredibly fraught moment, all the questions of performativity, delegation, and spectatorship emerge. The result, however, can hardly be described as exploitation (as the rebellious students provocatively claimed). Rather, it is a reflection of the group's intense desire to preserve the precarious, intimate collective they have cultivated in the midst of a society that sees no value in their work. To the outside this collective appears as a single organism, always under the threat of external violence or internal despair. Nonetheless, the collective emerges from each of these ritualized moments of death and alienation to repopulate the intimate space of the school, the house of culture, or one of their offshoots—most notably the **Intimate Space** gallery, which **Marina Maraeva**, a graduate of the school, opened in her own apartment in 2014. None of these deaths are real, after all—they are staged exposures to the death of a collective body, which ultimately serves to return that body to the spacing of singular beings and their community of shared finitude (to borrow the terms of **Jean-Luc Nancy**). Each approach to the brink of death is followed by a renewed assertion of intimacy — one hand on your own body and one hand on the other's, as one of Gasteva's fundamental techniques involves. The Chto Delat school is prey to all the problems that haunt participatory, pedagogical art projects. But their practice ultimately involves the exploration of these problems as a fundamental tension between intimacy and public-ness. In this way, the school simultaneously offers a method for reflecting on the profound challenges that face any attempt to forge an oppositional community in this time of great peril, while also stubbornly insisting on the utopian potential of such efforts.

With each new independent collective founded by students and graduates of the school (and there have been a tremendous number of these already, including, by the way, the **"Red Thug"** cooperative that emerged from the *"Excluded"* controversy), the utopian space of intimacy expands, diversifies, and becomes increasingly sustainable. This is an atmosphere unlike anything you will find in western MFA programs, which are typically defined by intense competition and anxiety. A tiny percentage of the artists that emerge from western programs may produce public statements of a higher profile than those of Chto Delat's students. But these programs pale in comparison to the St. Petersburg school when it comes to the production and sustenance of a patient practice of intimacy, which never slips into pathological forms of introspection or escapism.

Of course, such practices cannot be seen as a substitute for real activism and the continuing struggle to create a

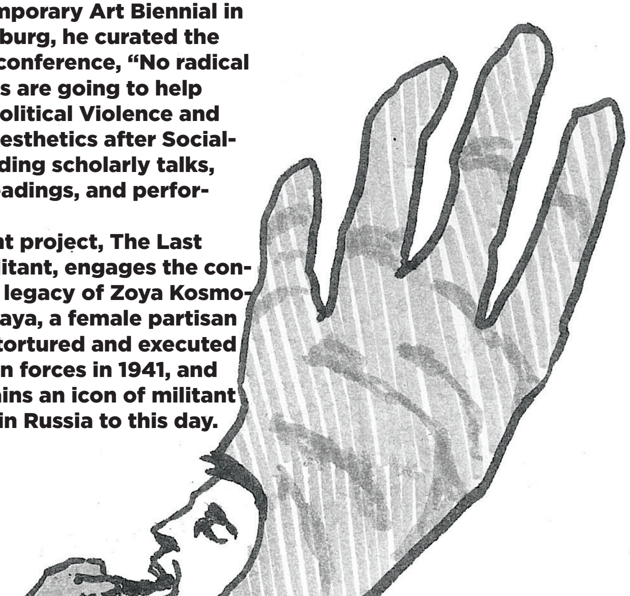
genuine counter-public capable of competing with the one that official ideology addresses. But such a substitution is not the real danger that faces Chto Delat's students. The real danger comes from society itself, and their common task in warding off this danger is to maintain solidarity, to preserve the right to utopian vision and speech, and to reflect meaningfully on the tension between the collective body we all long for and the internal and external contradictions and antagonisms that define its precarious life as an unrealized potential. The time for heroic interventions is coming (this time is, of course, always now, in **Walter Benjamin**'s sense, but it is also a question of time's fullness, its coming to term). When it comes, the new heroism will have to avoid the pitfalls of performative jouissance and hysterical narcissism that plagued Russian actionism, despite its unquestionable power. The new heroism will be a mass movement, led by activist-organizers and, one hopes, some new form of political party (perhaps, indeed, one that does not merely tolerate antagonisms, but which cultivates them). Alternative, utopian, intimate institutions are not only a way to sustain these future heroes until the time is ripe. They also provide a site and a method for putting the question of that future time to oneself and one another each day anew.





Jonathan Brooks Platt

writes on topics including Stalin-era culture, representations of reading in Russian Romanticism, and the actionist tradition in Russian contemporary art.
His monograph, Greetings, Pushkin!: Stalinist Cultural Politics and the Russian National Bard appeared in 2017 through the University of Pittsburgh Press and, in Russian translation, the European University in St. Petersburg Press. He is a widely-published translator of new Russian Left poetry, particularly by the Omsk-born poet Galina Rymbu, and he has collaborated on artistic projects with Chto Delat, the Factory of Found Clothes, and the Techno-Poetry music cooperative.
In 2014, as part of the Manifesta 10 Contemporary Art Biennial in St. Petersburg, he curated the four-day conference, "No radical art actions are going to help here...": Political Violence and Militant Aesthetics after Socialism, including scholarly talks, literary readings, and performances.
His current project, The Last Soviet Militant, engages the controversial legacy of Zoya Kosmodemianskaya, a female partisan who was tortured and executed by German forces in 1941, and who remains an icon of militant devotion in Russia to this day.





Learning to learn in a context of war

Edgardo García

This text was first published at artseverywhere.ca

October 26, 2015,

From some corner of this beautiful planet,

Compas:[1]

The memories of our encounter still resonate in my mind and in my heart. I still need to process many things. The hassle of everyday life has caught me, and it is always complicated for me to sit and write my feelings/thoughts (sentipensamientos), but I did not want to let the time go by without leaving some notes about what our encounter has generated in me.

The Ecoversities gathering was a rupture in which I was constantly confronted, both in the foundations as well as in the forms. This state allowed me to change my perception of the world. I was no longer the same when I came back home. What we lived in the meeting hall in Tamera was a very clear expression of what is happening in the world in this historical moment: a collapse, in which the old concepts are falling down and new practices are being born; the words that we have are no longer useful to name the new world and we see the Global South warning the Global North about the approaching storm; we shared a radical criticism of school, conventional education, and institutions; the acknowledgment that there is a war going on that affects everyone in very different ways, under the mask of democracy and development, with some of us facing death; we admitted the radical and deep conviction that we need to do something; we honored the creativity of thousands of persons around the world that create something different (not only in the educational area), and how they birth new worlds in the face of the capitalist monster that wants to crush us.

What we lived cannot be expressed in words. Even so, it is important to try to draw a general sketch of what we shared, because the global moment we live deserves it, because it is urgent to weave ourselves together, all of us who fight, resist and create, because we have the hope that our knowledges and our experiences may be useful for many persons, groups, collectives and communities around the world. That's why I write, with love, these words for you about the Ecoversities gathering…

NEW WORDS FOR NEW WORLDS

Our elders say that in order to give birth to the world, we need to name it. What we currently experience is that the words that we have are no longer useful to name what is happening. We, the new generations, live in a very different world to that of our parents; the old dreams fell down, the information is instantaneous, and the whole planet is changing at unimaginable pace. That is why we think that in order to birth new worlds we need to start by naming them; we need to create the new words or concepts from which the practices and experiences of everyday life will emerge from, here and now, not in an ideal and utopic future but in the world that we live in today.

[1] Translator's Note [T.N.] Compa, the shortened version of compañero or compañera, carries within it a charge of solidarity, of acknowledgment of the other as someone who shares the deep struggle for another kind of world. It is not vanguardist, and it opens up the room for instant friendship. It could be translated as "comrade" in English, but I have decided to preserve the original Spanish word throughout the essay to honor this energy in the word.

What do we mean when we talk about education? What are we thinking about? During our gathering, there was no agreement around the meaning of *"education"* or *"higher education"* among the different persons, collectives, organizations and communities involved in educational practices. It was not about definitions: rather, it was about everyone creating something new, beyond the classical idea of *"education"*: of the master and the student; of the mere transfer of knowledges; of the educational bureaucracy; of the endless repetition of dogmas. The majority of us were thinking in new spaces of learning: how to talk about the pain with the children, how to generate useful knowledges for life, and that experience was leading us to question the use of the word, about its colonial burden, about its functionality to the capitalist system.

So, we started asking ourselves if the word is no longer useful to say what we want to say. If it is not education, then what is it? Some of the organizations present there, such as Tahgmees from Jordan, Unitierra Oaxaca, Unitierra Califas, and many others proposed to use the term LEARN or LEARNING, reclaiming the verb that evokes the action. When we speak about learning we see that it is easy to set up our actions in that field, because we all learn in every moment, under diverse circumstances and determined contexts, like the war in which we are currently situated.

One of the most interesting words that we learned during this gathering was ECOVERSITIES, in plural, in opposition to UNIVERSITY. This word breaks the homogenization to which we have been subjected for centuries: the idea of a universal knowledge. The ecoversities are those networks of friends, communities or collectivities where learning is based on the direct experience of life.

Eco-versity evokes learning from diversity by making contact with mother Earth. The ecoversities are a fundamental innovation in this time where the dominant system attempts to control the minds and the hearts of people by telling them how they have to learn, live, dream, think, and even love. This proposal is a global movement in which millions of people in thousands of different places around the world are discretely starting up other ways of learning by trying to reconnect us to Mother Earth. It is an unfolding insurrection, as the compañero Gustavo Esteva has called it.

We know that it is necessary to reinvent more words and dispose those that keep their colonial burden, i.e. development, democracy, progress, success. We learned that words are really important and that only the practice will give us the inspiration to find them. We learned to name the new worlds that we create everyday, and we learned to dream with some other worlds that are about to be born.

SHARING FROM THE HEART, PERSONAL STORIES AS TOOLS OF LEARNING

When diverse people from such close or such distant geographical places meet, one of our first challenges was to find the way to tell each other what we are doing, how we are seeing the world and what we think we should do. In the attempt, we experienced the failure of certain methodologies that were incapable of connecting us and generating a comfortable space for sharing. We learned together that the existence of a structure from the *"outside"* or *"from above"* makes it impossible to speak between compañeroas,[2] because it inevitably generates hierarchies (even if we are not attempting to do so). This made us question, how often do we reproduce the dominant logic, in our alternative practices?

[2]
[T.N.] Compañeroas is the term that the Zapatistas invented to escape from the gender binary, using both vowels that in Spanish denote masculine and feminine nouns, exchanging them and placing them in different orders, to reflect the untamed fluidity and rebellion to labels that may put us in certain boxes.

We learned that, apparently, it is very simple to fight when the enemy is very clear and can be clearly named and identified, most of all when the enemy is something or someone external to us and our practices, but what happens when this system permeates and invades us even in our minds and hearts? How can we fight against that? Ivan Illich said once: *"¡To hell with good intentions!"* [3] Good will is not enough. It is important to acknowledge that there are dominant structures and logics we have adopted and that, even if we dress them up as "alternatives," they are still colonizing and reproducing power, hierarchy, and exploitation. One of the tools we used to fight against this during our gathering was dialogue, criticism, and self-criticism, to acknowledge that we are not pure, and that this is part of our struggle. To free our minds and our hearts is a first step to liberate our spaces, our practices, and our endeavor.

This series of questions led us to some others: how can we share with others, from a position of diversity, our experience of the struggle? And we understood that in these times in which we try to rationalize everything, it is necessary to go back to feel-think: that is to reconnect the mind and the heart and to share from personal experience. So, we decided to listen to the personal stories of the compañeros and compañeras as a way of telling ourselves: *"this is me"* and *"my life has been this way," "therefore I am fighting this way."* We proposed to share from the heart, telling our life stories to others. And we realized that this is a very powerful learning tool because when we speak with the heart we really understand the other and we can even feel what the other feels.
And we started… speaking about the Mexican context. This torn territory in which more than 250 thousand lie dead because of the useless war of the last ten years. The whole country is a mass grave. We wake up everyday with the news of the death of some compañero or compañera. In Mexico, the war against drugs was the perfect excuse for those in power to implant the war in the north of the country and to examine the reaction of the people. They did it very well, they left clean territories for their businesses while thousands of people were displaced, abandoning their homes to move to *"safer zones,"* or they disappeared and were murdered for the crime of hindering the interests of the financial capital, in what the governments call *"collateral damages."*

Nowadays, we see that this war against civil populations is a part of an integral, total war of the capitalist system. A war that is recrudescing everywhere, mainly in the South where the indigenous communities are located alongside their territories, rich in water, forests, minerals, and life. And the goal is to eliminate this life (because that is business), which is why we have this accelerated militarization to contain the response of the society, to intimidate the civil population, and to advance positions to get what they want to appropriate: the commons. And we see that this war is not only happening in Mexico but that it is happening everywhere—in Greece, Brazil, India, everywhere, and that is why we name this the FOURTH WORLD WAR, as the Zapatistas say.

The main characteristic of this war is that it has multiple facets. It is not the classical war in which there are two factions confronting each other. Rather, it is a diversified attack strategy in several fronts, and the educational front is one of the most important: to educate to obey, to educate to domesticate, to educate to allow exploitation. But this is not the only way: we also have social programs, economic crisis, environmental crisis, the imposition of development, the attack to the traditional forms of life. In each territory there is a different costume for

[3] Title of a talk given by Illich in the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, on April 20, 1968. In his usual biting and sometimes sarcastic style, Illich goes to the heart of the deep dangers of paternalism inherent in any voluntary service activity, but especially in any international service "mission."

this war. And that is why it is important to name, study, and analyze it, so that we can know it and therefore neutralize and destroy it. Returning to the Zapatista metaphor, what we see in Mexico is a storm, *"a catastrophe is approaching in all the senses,"* and that is why we attend gatherings such as this one to ask ourselves with others: what are we going to do?

That is precisely the question that we asked and that we ask ourselves everyday, and in *"walking by asking,"* as we have learned from the Zapatistas, we find others that also have this question and we learn what they are doing. We learn about their successes and their mistakes and we see, thus, that something very important to do is TO ASK, TO WALK, AND TO MEET OTHERS.To be aware of this war, name it, and live it is painful. During our gathering, thanks to Vanessa, I could release all the pain that this war has provoked in me. For a moment, while I was closing my eyes and I was following the words of Vanessa I was telling myself: *"I don't like these kinds of dynamics and this is not going to work with me,"* but I kept on listening to Vanessa, and that triggered memories, images of my childhood, when I was asking my parents why the world was like this, full of suffering, where a lot of people die without apparent reason: *"they just died."* I remembered the compañeraBety, murdered by the mean government some years ago. The images of the thousands of dead of this country came to me, of the compañeritos of Ayotzinapa and I broke down in tears, I couldn't stop crying, my heart shrank. I come from a place where *"men don't cry"* and for me, during all my life, it has always been very hard to cry, but this time I could relieve myself. I cried in rage, in courage, in anger, and I felt liberated because that pain turned into an inner fire that leads me to the conviction that sooner or later WE ARE GOING TO WIN THIS WAR. But the victory will not come from heaven; we need to fight. During the Ecoversities gathering there were a lot of hearts sharing: Brazil, Jordan, Slovenia, United States, Argentina, Canada, and many others, who recognized that this is actually a global war that is destroying ourselves everywhere and that is why it is so important to WEAVE our experiences, to share our learnings, to learn how to transform the pain into rage so that we can transform it later into rebellion and resistance.

When we share from the heart we cannot judge; the field of the analysis becomes different. We share feelings and then we can understand everything better. We understand why we are the way we are, where our fears and our pains are coming from, and we learn together to respect ourselves and to tell each other: *"you are not alone."*

LEARNING TO LEARN IN A CONTEXT OF WAR

Being aware of the gravity of the current situation, the question about education or learning radically changes. Learning is translated into survival, learning to learn in a context of war is fundamentally learning to defend and create life. So, how do we generate this kind of learning? That is the big question. Our survival depends on it. Learning to learn has a lot do with ruptures. I love ruptures. They are like earthquakes that shake you deeply from the interior and destroy the form in which you were looking at the world. During our gathering we lived a lot of ruptures. I think that is what learning is about. It is about questioning the imposed truths, to open ourselves to the other, and it is in that bareness that we can learn that the world is not reduced to the place in which we live,[4] and that there are other forms of understanding life, love, and spirituality.

[4] [T.N.] El pedazo donde nos tocó vivir, in the original. This sentence makes reference to the fact that somehow, "we were chosen" to live in certain places. We don't just live or choose where to live.

In order to be able to learn we need to break with everything that refrains us from understanding the other. To achieve this, we need to start by destroying the individual. At Unitierra we say that the individual is just a fiction, that it does not exist, that nobody is completely an "I" but that WE ARE an assemblage of social relations that makes US who we are: our family, community, ancestors, territory. But we see that many of us still believe the tale of the INDIVIDUAL or of INDIVIDUALITY; we go through life thinking that we are an "I". The individual is the base of the current system: in the name of the individual, nature is destroyed. The I is the first person of the singular that razes and spoils everything. It is the base of progress and development that has left thousands of millions dead in this world. That is why we need to destroy it and to start reconstituting ourselves from the WE. We need to reveal its falseness and counter it with the recuperation of our WE, of the collectivity, the understanding that we are not INDIVIDUALS but PERSONS, and that we need the others so that we can live.

I told some of you that in our indigenous communities, in our mother languages we don't have a word to say *"I"*. It just does not exist. All the time we speak from the WE and that radically changes the way of seeing and understanding the world. Let's try not to say the word *'I'* for one day and we'll notice the huge difference that naming the world in another way brings.

While reviewing our learnings, we realize that not everything is lost. We have many examples all around the world of people trying to answer to the question: what to do? How to survive to the war and create a new world at the same time? For us, the closest, clearest and most inspiring examples are in our original peoples and communities, because they have been doing that, not only now but for more than 500 years. Our communities teach us the meaning of the words TERRITORY, DIGNITY, RESISTANCE and LIFE. We need to invert the form in which we have been generating knowledge in recent years. Let's turn our regard to those who, without big discourses or elaborated concepts, are defending the territory and the life, not only for them and their communities, but for the entire planet.

The Zapatista people,[5] rebel men and women, are an enormous light to us. Those indigenous to the Mexican southeast declared war on the bad government and opened a crack in the wall of history that, since 1994, keeps expanding across the world. It is not a trend or a religion but a learning that we reclaim. Today, the compañeros Zapatistas have shown us that it is possible to bury capitalism, building autonomy in several areas: health, education, economic resistance, food sovereignty, and self-government.

The escuelita Zapatista was for us a turning point regarding learning for life. Thousands of people from the five continents came to the Zapatista territory and lived with Zapatista families for a week. We were not learning in a classroom. Instead, we were learning in everyday life how one fights, how one resists. The whole community was the space for learning. A kind of learning tied to the defense of life and the creation of new worlds.
But we know that this is not about copying models. Rather, each one of us needs to do what needs doing wherever we are working, because we are clear that we are not going to be able to do this alone. If we fight, all of us, at the same time, everyone, everywhere in the world, we will achieve in collapsing the system from its very foundations. We'll defeat the capitalist monster and

[5]
[T.N.] Los pueblos Zapatistas, in the original. The literal translation for pueblos is people. However, the meaning associated to that word in Spanish denotes a political category, a feeling of unity and solidarity, while simultaneously associating the people to the territory. Pueblo is the same word for "people" and for "town."

finally, we'll create that world where many worlds are embraced, as the Zapatistas say. That is why we need to organize ourselves today, not tomorrow, here and now, no matter where we are, in the countryside or in the city. Every struggle or resistance is worthwhile: small alternatives, everywhere across the world, facing simultaneously the capitalist monster. The struggle needs to be global, from north to south, from east to west.

This way of looking at things bolsters the deep meaning of solidarity. It is not about "*supporting the poor indigenous/marginalized/underdeveloped folks who fight in the Global South"*, nor is it about *"bringing the Black, the indigenous, the women, so that they can learn from our model."* It is about being responsible for what happens in our contexts and to start fighting and organizing wherever we are. In the transition from charity to responsibility, solidarity is translated into mutual support, reciprocity, and respect. Let's break down the hierarchies and let's meet each other horizontally!

How do we avoid falling into the models? We need to resist constantly the idea that *"we are the good ones,"* that *"our model is the best,"* because it is this arrogance which leads us to replicate the same system that we are combatting. We need to learn to recognize our own mistakes, to criticize ourselves so that we can know what we are doing wrong and to learn how others struggle and resist.

And it is at this point that we ask: how far are we willing to go to defend life? One indigenous compañero told me once: *"for us, it is very clear: this war is about those who bet for death against those of us who bet for life. What are we willing to do to defend life? We are willing to do everything to defend life, even*

giving our lives. That is why we fight. For us, the people, fighting is like breathing. If we don't fight we feel that we cannot breathe. In this vision, we do not see heroes or martyrs but the real and deep meaning of understanding territory and life. The people say: *"where those above destroy, we, those below, rebuild."* That is why it is important to repeat: learning to learn in the current planetary context means to bet for life, to defend it, to take care of it, and to create it.

FRIENDSHIP AS THE GLUE[6] TO CREATE COMMUNITY

One of the most recurring questions in our gathering was: *"How can we create community where there is no longer community?"* It seems that in the Ecoversities gathering we pointed to one of the answers: through friendship.

We have a lot of friends everywhere, but friends like those we met at this gathering we do not find that easily. In Tamera we built *"another friendship,"* a deep and radical friendship, full of hope. A friendship that has no limits or barriers; that overcame the languages, the words; a friendship that was expressed as the harmonic movement of our hearts beating in synchronicity in that room of that ecovillage in the middle of the desert in Portugal. There is a word for that here, we call it conmoción, which means *"to move with the heart,"* and it was you, compas, who taught me to conmoverme (co-move with the heart) in all the ways: in the feeling of pain and rage that as a contagion was spread on me through your personal stories; in the spiritual sense of understanding the quests of everyone; in feeling love to all levels; in moving with the other, with you, with us.

[6] Author's note: I am not sure this is the best word but it gives the idea.

When the original communities have been destroyed, what is left for us? When we have lived in an urban setting, stripped off, away for any form of community, how do we build community again? One answer is in that DEEP FRIENDSHIP that works as a glue to rebuild our communities. The indigenous communities are there. Despite all the efforts to vanquish them you can be sure that we will be here for a long time. Meanwhile, we cannot wait for our indigenous communities to survive the storm; we need to MULTIPLY THE COMMUNITIES IN THE CITIES. They do not have to be a copy of rural communities: we need to reinvent them. Deep friendship enables that. So, the challenge is: how can we generate that feeling of deep friendship that we felt in Tamera with those that we have closer to us? Because in order to build community, it is very important to liberate the territory. And we, in the distance, cannot meet in a territory, even though we long constantly for that. That is why it is important to gather with those who are closer to us, in our neighborhood, on our block, in our building, in our work space. There is no time, we cannot keep waiting, we need to do it TODAY.

If capital is a social relation of exploitation and if the Deep Friendship is a social relation of hope, the latter thus enables us to destroy capital and create new social relations that have as a premise the creation of other worlds.

Deep Friendship lasts forever because it is not subjected to conditions, it surrenders without limits, it expands infinitely, and it is very contagious. This friendship fulfills the heart and charms it with hope. This friendship is a way of knowing that in the most remote corner of the world there is somebody, a compañero, a compañera, that also fights for a better tomorrow.

I miss you all my friends, I love you very much, compañeros, compañeras. Here we keep on fighting, for more than 500 years now. Here we are, yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Your friend and compañero,
Edi

Edgardo Leonel García is a young Zapotec, sociologist, and peasant apprentice from Southern Mexico. He is a founder and member of the Autonomous Cooperative of Sharing and Learning of Oaxaca (CACAO), which aids in the struggle for food sovereignty. His knowledge about life comes mainly from the wisdom of his indigenous community. He has participated in initiatives to re-weave the social fabric of communities affected by poverty and violence in the Central Valleys of Oaxaca, México, through community workshops that construct solutions for planting vegetables, handling garbage, and collective water management. Currently he is engaged in autonomous learning, self-management for life (autogestión), regeneration of the social fabric, and autonomy of the native peoples



Insurgent Learning and Convivial Research: Universidad de la Tierra, Califas [1]

Manuel Callahan

Knowledge production has increasingly become central to emancipatory projects. More and more people in struggle recognize the importance of learning and research as an essential part of movement and also an essential part of those moments of the future in the present across the globe. Alongside the serial protests and convergences of the 1990s and the occupations and assemblies of the 2000s there has been a keen interest in spaces of learning and research, often articulated into autonomous oppositional spaces, especially, but not limited to free, radical, and alternative "universities."[2] These counter sites of inquiry and skill-share have been central to radical democratic oppositions to capitalism's excesses, linking the reclaiming of knowledge commons and "vernacular values" of knowing with sustained confrontations against the most destructive forces of neoliberalism. Moreover, the proliferation of "convergence spaces," or spaces of encounter, within this context along with spectacular advances in digital technologies has made "subaltern" and situated knowledge production more widely available.[3] The occupation of cyberspace as part of an "electronic fabric of struggle" has dramatically increased access, circulation, and archiving of large amounts of information while also encouraging more complex efforts of increased self-representation and self-determination against and beyond dominant systems.[4] The intersection of technological advances and increasingly autonomous political mobilization has therefore made knowledge production a more visible and necessary component of both alter-globalization and globalization from below, long before and after the Arab Spring, Indignados, and Occupy captured our imaginations.

[1—32] footnotes of this text are at pp. 105—112

Not surprisingly, the emergence of autonomous learning and research spaces coincides with a growing disaffection with formal education as an institutionalized, commodified process that sustains elites—those few who can possess and profit from a thing called "education"—and advances a colonial project. But it also has been increasingly recognized as a space of dressage that seeks to devalue and contain convivial practices, especially the everyday vernacular learning that sustains us.[5] People are suspicious of the low intensity education increasingly visible throughout the neoliberal, privatized educational system.[6] "Education" is, as Illich warned, the paradigmatic, overwrought industrial system and tool.[7] What follows is a brief examination of Universidad de la Tierra (UT) Califas, an autonomous learning space rooted in the southern portion of the San Francisco Bay Area. We present UT Califas here as a convivial tool to examine both its strategy and practice in pursuing prefigurative, convivial, and networked pedagogies outside of the dominant educational system. Towards that end, we explore how UT Califas is animated by insurgent learning and convivial research—two moments of a prefigurative praxis oriented to rebuilding the social infrastructure

of community, re-learning the habits of assembly, and fostering anti-capitalist social relations. The stress here is how spaces of insurgent learning and convivial research are efforts that can potentially unravel a capitalist social relation while at the same time encourage autonomous alternatives.[8] If we only focus our efforts on disrupting formal education as an industrial tool, we lose sight of other vernacular and oppositional knowledge practices and spaces of learning that could potentially undermine and eventually go beyond the authority of the subject/object relationship, the celebration of the individual, and imposition of capitalist command. Fundamental to our effort to critically claim insurgent learning and a convivial research approach is also to confront the epistemicide central to the West's colonial project especially articulated through Western notions of progress, development, and civilization.[9]

UT Califas is not modeled after nor does it attempt to replicate or compete in any way with traditional, institutional educational projects such as the formal university organized around the classroom, seminar, conference, lecture hall, or institutional archive. UT Califas is not confined to any buildings, nor does a cumbersome bureaucracy constrict it. Its "architecture" does not require a ysical space much less shelter a bureaucratic apparatus. Rather, UT Califas should be understood in the same way as the Aymara have deployed the "barracks" in their struggle for local autonomy which, according to Raúl Zibechi, "are social relationships: organizational forms based on collective decision-making and the obligatory rotation of duty, but in a militarized state or, in other words, adapted to cope with violent assault."[10] UT Califas poses as a set of questions the challenge of learning from and through "dislocated spaces" and autonomous projects including and most especially those "societies in movement" associated with indigenous autonomy.[11]

As an alternative to a formal institutional space, UT Califas claims a social architecture that exists only when we convene. It can include, for example, a Center for Appropriat(ed) Technologies and a Language and Literacy Institute as well as occasional Theses Clinics when needed.[12] Our primary space of insurgent learning and convivial research is the ateneo.[13] We currently host a Democracy Ateneo and Fierce Care Ateneo.[14] When UT Califas does convene, it gathers deprofessionalized intellectuals, community-based researchers, local culture-bearers, and a wide variety of insurgent learners. As a prefigurative, convivial, and networked pedagogy UT Califas embodies a praxis of inquiry that claims the future in the present, hosting spaces that refuse to wait for a day when we can dismantle the dominant educational system.

TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONES OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

To transcend the limits of bureaucratic structures, institutional sites, and professional identities, UT Califas' strategically engages interconnected, diffused, and decolonized spaces, or Temporary Autonomous Zones of Knowledge Production (TAZKP).[16] As everyday spaces of prefigurative, networked, and convivial pedagogies, TAZKP refuse to impose a preordained or established structure for learning. TAZKP are open interconnected spaces that extend "the classroom," celebrating collective strategies of knowledge production and inviting insurgent learners and convivial researchers to engage multiple sites of locally generated knowledges as part of an effort to regenerate community. TAZKP nurture a variety of oppositional knowledges through convivial processes that make it possible to co-generate knowledge, share information, provide support, build networks,

coordinate resources, and strategize for direct action between a wide variety of constituencies. TAZKP reclaim public spaces as sites of situated and poetic knowledges in service of community renewal, taking advantage of how knowledge overflows formal and informal sites and projects. TAZKP can be very deliberate, strategically networked sites or simply spontaneous spaces. As on-going spaces of encounter for research, reflection, and action, TAZKP make possible a variety of political and intellectual itineraries by facilitating the convergence of different groups, projects, and networks.[17] TAZKP decolonize and deterritorialize formal, dominant institutional spaces by gathering public intellectuals, scholar activists, community-based researchers, and local culture bearers for the purpose of pursuing local questions. In short, the TAZKP is and encourages "relays."[18] More importantly, the TAZKP can work as incubators for practices beyond capital and the state—a fragile learning space that actively encourages the re-conversion of nouns back into verbs.[19]

As an unfinished effort, UT Califas has been imagined in relation to other emergent projects and situated sites of autonomous learning. It attempts to braid together a number of interconnected spaces of co-learning and skill sharing as part of a larger effort to "re-weave the social fabric" of a community. As a collective pedagogy, UT Califas engages established movement and capacity building projects, popular education spaces, and community based action research efforts to re-circulate the grassroots "technologies" and situated knowledges that address immediate, local struggles. Committed to getting beyond the non-profit industrial complex and the educational industrial complex, UT Califas converts diversity trainings into dialogues, employment hierarchies into shared, collective work projects, and service learning into networked community spaces that collectively address local struggles related to California's changing demographics. More importantly, UT Califas subverts transmission pedagogies typical of traditional teaching and research institutions by refusing to organize organizers, teach teachers, or train trainers who are authorized to bestow knowledge to "the community."

Refusing to limit learning to single "pedagogical events" typical of transmission strategies, network pedagogy celebrates learning in "the spaces of social networks, where individuals interact, desire, and configure ourselves every day." Transductores, for example, reclaims the task of education by recognizing the interconnectedness of multiple agents, alternative media, and variety of institutions. Transductores disrupts the dominance of institutional and formal sites of privatized knowledge. Transductores decentralizes knowledge production by connecting a variety of agents, projects, and sites as well as links cultural processes with pedagogical ones. Thus, according to Javier Rodrigo Montero, a collective pedagogy is necessarily unpredictable, unstable, and irregular.[20]

Collective, networked, and convivial pedagogies are subversive and regenerative at once. UT Califas is committed to learning about how learning works especially drawing wisdom from communities of struggle organized around community regeneration, reciprocity, and balance. However, the effort implies a commitment to explore the challenges and opportunities that emanate from intercultural dialogues that are tenuous and not easily undertaken, especially in a context of a "democratic despotism" that has not yet been fully dismantled.[21] Thus, UT Califas is a cautious effort to engage the convivial praxis of the Indigenous autonomous movement especially its articulation at the Universidad de la

Tierra "campuses" in Oaxaca, Chiapas, and, most recently, Puebla. UT Califas in the South Bay imagines a decentralized and diffused horizontal learning project as a cargo, or collectively entrusted obligation for community renewal that pursues research and learning projects organized as community determined tequios de investigación.[22] The challenge we face is how to pursue a collective pedagogy in urban, landless contexts with few cultural resources that can be called on to imagine a radically different social relation while also cultivating a studied reciprocity and sacred connection to place.
One example of a collective pedagogy that serves as a critical point of reference is comunalidad. Comunalidad, according to Jaime Martínez Luna, is "the epistemological notion that sustains an ancestral, yet still new and unique, civilizing process, one which holds back the decrepit individualization of knowledge, power, and culture." Although it emerges out of a historical context of resistance to colonialism, internal colonialism, and neocolonialism, comunalidad, as Martínez explains, is a pedagogy that promotes harmony between individuals and the community and the community with the environment.[23] "Comunalidad is a way of understanding life as being permeated with spirituality, symbolism, and a greater integration with nature. It is one way of understanding that human beings are not the center, but simply a part of this great natural world."[24] A unique approach to collective pedagogy, comunalidad shifts the focus from education as the domain to prepare individuals contained within the discursive formations of progress and development to an emphasis on community regeneration that stresses the value of reciprocity and rootedness. A collective pedagogy that results from a more complex process of community regeneration claims a variety of cultural and social resources committed to community renewal. Thus, comunalidad creates a context for knowledge sharing that is integral and dialogic.[25] It fully decolonizes education.

TAZKP politicize "traditional" cultural practices and spaces by converting them into active deliberate spaces of knowledge production. In the case of UT Califas four cultural practices, including tertulia, ateneo, mitote, and coyuntura, have been reclaimed/reinvented as part of a larger autonomous praxis. Although each reclaimed cultural practice is subject to shifting meanings given the variety of class, gender, and race tensions peculiar to specific gatherings as well as the contexts in which each is convened, together these cultural practices function as open spaces of encounter organized for grassroots knowledge production appropriate for the specific context or network of projects and spaces that it articulates. In keeping with a convivial itinerary, each cultural practice reclaims and politicizes the code that narrates it by redeploying it for political uses.

The most public and less formal, the tertulia politicizes regular local gatherings often common to barrios as sites to generate and archive local histories of struggle.[26] Tertulias that achieve a more political focus, as we are suggesting here, can operate as Virtual Centers, meaning they can parallel the research efforts of more sophisticated elite "Research Centers" or "Think Tanks" without the costs or infrastructure. Thus, a consistent and accessible tertulia is a site of knowledge production where community members can develop projects, coordinate activities, facilitate networks, share resources, and promote research. Often criminalized in the popular consciousness, the mitote works as a reclaimed public space of celebration convened to generate poetic knowledges that privilege arts, dance, and embodied research.[27] We deploy the ateneo not as a space typical of the acade

my such as an advanced seminar, conference, workshop, plenary, or research cluster, but to insist on it as an open, diffuse space that can facilitate locally generated investigations that address specific situations in the community. As a space that allows us to gather as a diverse situated community, it potentially transcends bureaucratic structures and professional identities to promote reflection and action. The coyuntura draws from the popular education practices inspired by the work of Paulo Friere and Ivan Illich, encouraging participants to generate new tools and language for struggle as they collectively engage a series of activities and reflection and action spaces.[28]

As spaces that reclaim commons, regenerate community, and facilitate intercultural and intergenerational dialogues, tertulias, mitotes, ateneos, and coyunturas construct a complex and distributed "grassroots think tank" while also potentially re-generating the social infrastructure of community and at times relearning the habits of assembly.

It is important to note that all of the interconnected spaces work together to form something of a de-compression chamber, an in-between space that links "the community" with the non-profit and educational industrial complexes without being subsumed by bureaucratic exigencies, institutional agendas, or careerist demands. The decompression chamber constructed by the community architecture of interconnected spaces is an experimental space that explores various efforts at deprofessionalization, cultural regeneration, and social re-weaving. Ultimately it forms something of an "institution of the commons." "These should not be thought of as 'happy islands,' or free communities sealed off from exploitative relationships," explains Gigi Roggero. "Indeed, there is no longer an outside within contemporary capitalism. The institutions of the common are the autonomous organization of living knowledge, the reappropriation of social wealth, and the liberation of the powerful forces frozen in the threadbare dialectic between public and private: black studies since the 1960s and the contemporary experiences of autonomous education, or self-education."[29]

FACILITATION: PRACTICE, ART, AND TECHNOLOGY

Autonomous learning spaces are not without their challenges and, disappointingly, oppositions. Taking seriously Jorge Gonzalez's admonishment, that "the way we organize ourselves to produce knowledge determines the knowledge we produce," we recognize the challenge in pursuing prefigurative, convivial, and networked pedagogies that anticipate the relation between strategies of knowledge production and the production of social relations, underscoring that a collective pedagogy is always contingent and emergent.[30]

The prefigurative, networked, and convivial pedagogies that define many autonomous learning spaces, either implicitly or explicitly, address the question of facilitation. By facilitation we mean the concern about the impact of power, or better put, how power works in and through a space and the relations defined by it. On a practical level autonomous learning spaces must find a way to manage how knowledge is co-generated, new knowledge is accessible, and different, often competing knowledges archived within a context of power. Knowledge is always a graph of struggle reflecting what ways of knowing are celebrated and which epistemologies are vulnerable to marginalization in specific contexts. A space that treats knowledge as essential to the construction of

a new relation must necessarily avoid the "explaining expert" and abandon any vestiges of "teaching" where the presumption is that one person or group possesses knowledge as a commodity that others do not have. The critical challenge is how to introduce new knowledges that might be familiar to a community or group, the vernacular knowledges that sustain it, and to establish some consistency in a process that makes the co-generation of new knowledges possible. Thus, the purpose of taking facilitation seriously is simply to find a path to collective or shared learning, not to insure that one claim of knowing dominates another.

A politically engaged facilitation approach should contribute to the overall effort to establish the learning space as a radically democratic space. A facilitation approach that addresses the challenges above is one that accounts for at least three dimensions of any organic effort that seeks to insure a space is horizontal and the learning is therefore shared. Towards that end we imagine facilitation as engaging three critical dimensions: practice, art, and technology.

Facilitation as practice attends to the basic focus of all facilitation efforts that have become increasingly common of group work in the business and non-profit world. In other words, the facilitation should make possible the participation of everyone present and take seriously the contributions each participant might make in the overall project. Both business and group-process "models" stress the importance of recording the process so the group or community has a sense of its achievements especially the goals and collective genius that the group claims. Unfortunately, while the practice of facilitation is necessary it is often undertaken from above, a responsibility perceived to be onerous and therefore left to often self-selected individuals or cabals to guide, direct, and impose the ideas that the group or community eventually claim through a regimented process of directed activity and acquiescence.

More complicated is facilitation as "art." When we engage facilitation as "art" we often attend to critical, if often overlooked, elements of facilitation. Especially important is the challenge of reflecting back to the group the knowledge the group already claims as well as the new knowledge being generated. Equally important is the need to visualize the group's process, documenting the group's creative energy. More complicated still is the task of introducing new ideas or anticipating emergent questions not fully claimed by the group.

An innovative approach to facilitation that addresses some of the challenges listed above claims facilitation as technology. Defined very broadly technology includes any appropriate knowledge useful for a specific set of tasks. Tools are most useful when they emerge from collective processes addressing what works locally. Given that technology emerges from collective processes it necessarily is also a contested process.

Thus, we approach facilitation as modular. In this way, facilitation can be reduced to its essential elements, and once made explicit all of the required tasks of facilitation can be taken up by members of the group with each learning how to fulfill each task. Moreover, the tasks can be rotated, ensuring that everyone is familiar with all aspects of what would quickly become a shared facilitation. In addition, each task clearly delineated and taken up by members of the group on a rotating basis encourages the entire group to monitor the process ensuring that all tasks of the facilitation have been executed as

agreed. Thus, not only is the facilitation fully shared and horizontal, but it provides a built-in assessment strategy where the assessment is horizontal, collective, and constant.

One tool in particular that UT Califas deploys to address facilitation as practice, art, and technology is the "agreement." As a convivial tool, agreements allow the group to fully determine all aspects of the facilitation apparatus from the outset as well as allowing everyone access to change any portion of the process if necessary. Agreements can include the bundle of agreements associated with respectful, engaged listening and sharing, as well as more specific agreements such as producing summaries. More importantly, an agreement can include, for example, an agreement to organize the learning around questions. Generating questions can work as an assessment device to determine, paraphrasing C.L.R. James, what the group already knows, what it wants to do, and what it hopes for.[31]

CONCLUSION

In the recently published Keywords for Radicals one notices no entry for pedagogy or even learning. Also missing is convivial or conviviality.[32] The omission in an otherwise brilliant tome is revealing. While the authors suggest that words are sites that map struggle, in leaving out learning, or by extension pedagogy, they expose a critical challenge at a decisive moment in history. That is the risk we face in not accounting for learning as part of our explorations beyond the current system. How else are we going to claim or live in the present moment—one where, as the Zapatistas say, many worlds fit—if not through learning? How will our efforts towards social justice be in harmony with a fragile, if not debilitated planet if not through investigation? We must, as the Zapatistas recommend, learn how to learn. The global north must learn to learn from the global south and we must learn to learn from each other or we will consume our planet to extinction. How do we escape a commodity economy and the excesses of the modern state in its service without a praxis of inquiry? What is the pedagogy of justice in the current conjuncture where more and more of us recognize the future in the present? In a social setting dominated by industrial tools, convivial knowledge practices in service of community regeneration must be re-learned to be reclaimed.

Footnotes

[1]
The Universidad de la Tierra Califas can be accessed through the web page at <http://ggg.vostan.net/ccra/#18>. UT Califas is supported by the Center for Convivial Research and Autonomy <http://ggg.vostan.net/ccra/#1>. The Convivial Research and Insurgent Learning taller <http://cril.mitotedigital.org> is a web constellation of tools and resources associated with CCRA and UT Califas.

[2]
There are several examples of "autonomous" or "alternative" spaces of learning associated with direct action and movement spaces. See, for example, Undercommoning
[3] For a discussion of spaces of encounter as part of a Zapatista praxis, see Manuel Callahan, "Why Not Share a Dream," Humboldt Journal of Social Relations 29: 1 (2005): 6–38.

[4]
Harry Cleaver, "Circuits of Struggle?" Political Economy of Communication 4:1 (2016): 3–34.

[5]
For a discussion of vernacular knowledges, see Ivan Illich, "Vernacular Values," Philosophica 26:2 (1980): 47–102.

[6]
We define low intensity education as a state strategy to invest as little as possible in education in order to minimize cost in material and personnel while creating a system of artificial inequality through a privatized knowledge that creates an artificial meritocracy at the same time that it maximizes social control.

[7]
Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (London: Marion Boyars, 2002); Ivan Illich, Tools for Conviviality (London: Marion Boyars, 2009).

[8]
One of the most provocative and consistent insurgent learning and convivial research projects is the Zapatismo put forward by the EZLN and the Zapatista base communities. By insurgent learning we refer to a praxis that imagines learning as a central element of radical democratic praxis, facilitating active spaces of transformation for participants in alternative political sites. On a practical level, insurgent learning undermines low intensity education through explicit, horizontal practices that reclaim everyday spaces of learning. It also introduces complex processes of communal regeneration. Most importantly, it mobilizes learning as an essential part of an on-going effort to ensure that an emerging community is sufficiently informed and prepared to engage in collective decision-making. By convivial research we mean a collective investigative approach that refuses to objectify communities of struggle, engages multiple sites of knowledge production, generates new strategic, conceptual tools, and promotes what the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) calls “direct action casework” as part of an on-going process of community regeneration. Emerging from a renewed commitment to participatory, horizontal, and strategic approaches to knowledge production, convivial research prioritizes the intersection between engaged research, insurgent learning, and direct action as a fundamental dimension of a radical democratic praxis.

[9]
Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2014).

[10]
Raúl Zibechi, Dispersing Power: Social Movements as Anti-state Forces (Oakland: AK Press, 2010): 53–55.

[11]
UT Califas is an extension Universidad de la Tierra Oaxaca and owes much to that “campus” as well as the other Universidad de la Tierras in Chiapas, Puebla, and Toronto.

[12]
The Center for Appropriate(d) Technologies promotes the generating and sharing of a wide variety of strategic, community-oriented technologies, or convivial tools. The Language and Literacies Institute treats language very broadly, making sure not to privilege dominant forms of communication mostly associated with Western imperial languages. Convivial language and literacy projects provide critical opportunities to further the analysis of local issues through communication skills and a wide-variety of “reading” tools used to decode different literatures, shifting conjunctures, and emerging socio-political formations. Each tool is designed to assist in making autonomous praxis more legible. The Theses Clinic supports compañer@s who are strategically producing formal research products, such as theses or dissertations, for official programs. The “clinic” provides a horizontal, collective space that encourages researchers to treat the afflictions of empiricism and positivism. Long-term participants as well as “drop-ins” at the “clinic” can access a variety of tools that can “inoculate” researchers and prevent the potential spread of elite claims to professionalized authority and practices that objectify communities of struggle. Various collaborations and collective research projects will help decontaminate more formal university projects by making available locally situated convivial community-based knowledge production “technologies.”

[13]
The deployment of an ateneo as a strategy of oppositional learning and research has a long history especially associated with the Spanish anarchist community of the late 19th century. The rise of the alterglobalization struggle, or “movement of movements,” has witnessed a resurgence of “worker” organized research projects and learning spaces. Many of these new uses of the ateneo have drawn from the success of the horizontal autonomous practices associated with the social centers and the okupas active across Spain since the 1980s.

[14]
The Democracy Ateneo based in San Jose is an open space for reflection and action that interrogates the vexed and incomplete project of democratic promise. The learning space is animated by four critical themes: a) projects that attempt to democratize mainstream liberal institutions in the areas of learning, community wellness, food, and community safety; b) autonomous alternatives to traditional, representative democracy such as the Zapatista struggle and their critique of the party-state system, the analysis of the Fourth World War, and their experimentation with a politics of encounter; c) projects that have undermined democratic promise historically and politically including, for example, slavery, democratic despotism, development, neoliberalism, militarized policing, low intensity war, and (global) prison industrial complex; and d) the strategies, practices, and diverse formations that promote the production of collective subjects. In addition, starting from our oppositions we recognize the consistent struggle over care. For us the notion of "fierce care" is a concept that evokes the number of strategies that emerge in and through the social factory in opposition to the multiple, intersecting violences of capital. Our goal is to make more visible how capital and the state privatize care that, according to Precarias a la Deriva, manifests through externalization of the home, privatization of public space, destruction of the social wage, and the disciplining of desire. "Fierce care" not only exposes the violence of capital as it seeks to both privatize and militarize operations of care, it reveals the convivial practices and related tools of care that are often outside of the rhythms of capitalist reproduction. We hope to learn, for example, from the efforts by mothers and families to end police violence and the militarized policing and carceral apparatus currently directed at historically marginalized communities throughout the Americas. Or, how Indigenous communities are able to become the focal point of resistances against extractivist mining concerns. Or, how space, including urban space, can be reclaimed through collective action. In recent years and in response to various struggles and conditions, we have also convened an Insurgent Knowledges Ateneo (San Francisco) and a Social Factory Ateneo (Oakland).

[15]
For a critical discussion of the politics of hosting, see Gustavo Esteva, "Hosting the Otherness of the Other," in Frederique Appfel-Marglin and Stephen Marglin, eds., Decolonizing Knowledge: From Development to Dialogue (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996): 249–278.

[16]
Following Hakim Bey, the one most associated with the term "temporary autonomous zone," I am hesitant to define the full concept suggested here agreeing with Bey that, "in the end the TAZ is almost self-explanatory." However, the TAZ, warns Bey, is not an exclusive end in itself, replacing all other forms of organization, tactics, and goals." The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the state can crush it. Because the State is concerned primarily with Simulation rather than substance, the TAZ can 'occupy' these areas clandestinely and carry on its festal purposes for a quite a while in relative peace." According to Bey, "we recommend it because it can provide the quality of enhancement associated with the uprising without necessarily leading to violence and martyrdom." Hakim Bey, T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism (New York: Autonomedia, 1991): 98–101.

[17]
Rodrigo Montero, "Collective Pedagogies as Networked Activity: Possible Itineraries" in Transducers: Collective Pedagogies and Spatial Politics (2009): 242.

[18]
Michel Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power" in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977): 206.

[19]
Illich, Tools for Conviviality (1990): 39. See also, Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, "Towards New Political Creations: Movements, Institutions, New Militancy," Translated by Maribel Casas-Cortés and Sebastian Cobarrubias. Accessed from <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0707/sanchez/en> on August 24, 2009. Universidad Nómada, "Mental Prototypes and Monster Institutions:

Some Notes by Way of an Introduction," Translated by Nuria Rodríguez. Accessed from <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0508/universidadnomada/en> on August 2009.

[20]
Montero, "Collective Pedagogies as Networked Activity," p. 242

[21]
W.E.B Du Bois, "African Roots of War," Atlantic Monthly 115:5 (May 1915): 709. In his opposition to World War I, Du Bois argued that American capital and labor conspired to advance U.S. interests with a pay-off to white workers who would enjoy a slightly better wage, access to consumer goods, and a modicum of leisure time. This bargain, according to Du Bois, was necessarily managed through war, or permanent war, as part of a larger design to despoil Black and Brown workers abroad and at home to maintain an American lifestyle. Du Bois' theorization in many ways predates analysis attributed to Autonomist Marxists and others who point out the bargains made between the working class and capital. In this regard, Autonomists argue for the need to examine capital through compositions to make more visible the resistances of the working class as well as the official organizations that represent and attempt to contain working class insurgency, the sectors that potentially divide it, and the capitalist initiatives that seek to control it and exploit the divisions fostered within it.

[22]
By cargo we mean collectively community determined, entrusted obligation for community renewal. A tequio, on the other hand, refers to a community defined work project. For a discussion of cargo and tequio in the context of comunalidad, see Jaime Martínez Luna, "The Fourth Principle," in Lois Meyer and Benjamín Maldonado Alvarado, eds., New World of Indigenous Resistance (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2010): 85–100.

[23]
According to Jaime Martínez Luna and others, the resistance that defines original peoples is one that has at times incorporated key elements of dominating forces reinventing and mitigating their most corrosive effects.

[24]
Jaime Martínez Luna, "The Fourth Principle" in New World of Indigenous Resistance (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2012): 86, 93–94.

[25]
Jorge N. Ferrer, "Dialogic Inquiry as Spiritual Practice," Tikkun 18:1 (2003): 29–32

[26]
A tertulia refers to neighbors who gather at an accessible public space, such as a pub or coffee house, to share news and information that affect the community.

[27]
Mitote is a signifier originally used by the Spanish during the "age of discovery" of the Americas to criminalize Indigenous resistance. Initially the term signified what were perceived to be sinister gatherings of debauchery and excess assumed to be the result of the free use of intoxicants. The celebration and declarations, to the Spanish, must have confirmed their worst fears of an Indigenous disposition to subversion and the constant worry of revolt. In this instance, the term has been re-appropriated as a category of analysis, strategic practice, and a political objective. In this sense the term refers to a "clandestine" gathering marked by ritualized celebration and sharing of knowledge between generations for community renewal. As strategic sites of insurgent learning, mitotes operate as spaces of encounter in service of complex, emergent strategies of rebellion and autonomous political formation.

[28]
Throughout we rely on coyuntura, or conjunctural analysis, as a foundation to co-generate strategic knowledges and develop plans of action. We approach coyuntura as a category of analysis, a space for epistemological rupture, and as a space to actively produce new knowledges. Inspired by the intersections of critical pedagogy and liberation theology in Latin America during the 70s and 80s, coyuntura links research, analysis, reflection, action, and community empowerment by encouraging participants to name, define, narrate, and act on the struggle that impacts them in the current conjuncture, or what Gustavo Castro calls the "amplified present." Thus, coyuntura as a collective, horizontal practice of knowledge production exposes the competing strategies of opposing forces composed of key agents, projects, networks, and alliances. Not surprisingly, as an approach to analysis, coyuntura draws heavily on the major

theoretical advances of various “marxisms” and “post-marxisms” to illuminate the intersections between structural and cultural forces operating in economic, political, social, and cultural contexts over time. Coyuntura can also refer to a gathering convened for the purpose of producing new knowledges by first generating an epistemological rupture—exposing the views, attitudes, values, and concepts that are taken for granted and prevent a group from arriving at an agreed plan of action. Making a collective’s diverse, complex, and situated resources available often requires not only exposing the “common sense” but also revealing the sedimented technological expertise or those taken-for-granted concepts that can prevent a group from listening to one another, arriving at a shared analysis, and constructing new tools to solve local, immediate problems. For the most thorough treatment of coyuntura as praxis, see Gustavo Castro Soto y Enrique Valencia Lomelí, Metodologia de Analisis de Coyuntura vols. 1–10 (México: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados-México y Servicio Informativos Procesados, A.C., 1995).

[29]
Gigi Roggero, Production of Living Knowledge: The Crisis of the University and the Transformation of Labor in Europe and North America (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011): 9.

[30]
Jorge A. González, José Amozurrutia y Margarita Maass, Cibercultur@ e iniciación en la investigación: Por una cultura de Conocimiento (México: UNAM-CEIICH, el Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura y el CONACULTA, 2007).

[31]
C.L.R. James, “Black Power,” in Anna Grimshaw, ed., The C.L.R James Reader, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992): 362–374.

[32]
Kelly Fritsch, Clare O’Connor, and AK Thompson, Keywords for Radicals: The Contested Vocabulary of Late-Capitalist Struggle (Oakland: AK Press, 2016).

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The Radical Education Workbook, Part 2: Collectivity

Ultra-red + Radical Education Forum

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CIRCLE TIME

History

When primary classrooms were organised around the focal point of the carpet – a large empty space where children could sit together – circle time was, I imagine, a more common and meaningful feature of many primary school teachers' timetables. Since classrooms have become more functional spaces for a narrower type of target driven learning, the carpet as a space for coming together throughout the day has been eaten up by tables and seating arrangements that are designed to organise children by ability; the focus has shifted from the class as a collaborative community to a room that holds a lot of individuals as they rise, or do not rise, up the ladder of personal achievement.

Recently, Circle Time has had a resurgence, largely due to the curriculum's emphasis on Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). However, Circle Time as it is wheeled out in many schools today, often focuses on developing the self-esteem of individuals through routines that have been produced and sold as corporatised learning packages, devoid of their original commitment to collective learning.

Over many years, a Tower Hamlet's organisation called the Circle Works has developed an ideology and practice of circle time that aims to address the needs of the community, both the microcosm of community inside the classroom and the larger community outside it. The Circle Works grew out of teachers' belief that this space for reflection was necessary, both for them and the students they worked with, many of whom arrived in Tower Hamlets through very difficult circumstances. This strand of Circle Time is less about a corporate methodology and more about enabling teachers to see themselves as facilitators, enablers of rituals that children make on their own – objects, stories and routines become symbolic of a togetherness that influences the workings of the classroom in every instance.

Practice (one hour a week)

1. Ask everyone to make a circle.

2. Introduce the objects one by one:
—Conch (or equivalent) – an object that indicates who will speak at any given moment (symbolic of communication);

—Something else, special and intriguing, that comes with a story that can be owned by the group through its use (symbolic of 'us' – the collective);

—A bottle or spinner that can do the choosing (symbolic of the role of the individual.

3. Place the objects in the middle of the circle, spin the bottle to choose who will start. That person is given the special object and begins passing it around the circle to focus us together. Once it reaches the beginning again, place it in the centre as a focal point.

4.The conch is there ready to be received by anyone who needs to say something.

5. When issues are brought up, participants think about what could be done about this issue – developing rituals, games and concrete solutions for dealing with issues.

6. At the end of circle time, again the bottle is used to choose someone to begin the rotation of the object again. I use a candle which can be lit and blown out to boundary circle time.

In my time as a primary school teacher I have used circle times to build a dynamic community of people – children and staff. It is our shared strategy for dealing with difficult things. When someone dies, leaves, is unhappy, or has a big change or decision to make, we use circle time as the space to deal with it. Grounded in a set of familiar routines, this practice has got me and my class through some very tough times in a way that has felt genuine and thorough, sensitive and robust. It is not always an easy space, sometimes it is a space for challenge and confrontation, dealing with issues of sabotage, rejection or power. Sometimes it is simply a time to take stock or be still. There are many games which can be used to initiate discussion on these themes. Children love it; they rely on it and feel honoured by it.

Often you will hear children say, 'we dealt with that in circle time so it's sorted,' or 'I think we need a circle time.' The children give circle time a different status to other times they spend in school, and I think this is because this time is demarcated through ritual and has a slightly different set of values attached to it. As the year rolls on I am less and less a leader in the circle and more and more an equal member, and so the children have to step-up and take responsibility for safeguarding the space in order that it can be what they want it to be. Both the self-expression of the individual and the inter-relations of the community are able to thrive.

EDUCATION AGAINST EMPIRE

Since the 1830's, the British administration in India had been adjusting the education system to find native employees to work in low-level jobs around the empire. Acts such as the McCauly Minute had made it impossible to get a government job without a Western education; in practice, this meant attendance of a British run school, which taught the basics of a few academic subjects, including a pro-West history and English lessons. The minor funding available for these schools was outstripped by the demand; the lack of alternate employment encouraged parents to send their children to the facilities purely to secure jobs in the administration of the Empire. As a result, Bengal, where hundreds of millions of families survived through agriculture, found themselves with a centralized Western model of education, which

taught no skills relevant to agricultural life and exacerbated the prejudices of the Caste system. With the death rate in Bengal rising, a series of independence movements began to develop. The radical education practice of Rabindranath Tagore was initiated in 1904, shortly before he was awarded the Nobel Prize for the Ginjali, his collection of poems. His school, Santiniketan, named after the village outside of Calcutta where it was based, deliberately rejected the British model in favour of rural Hindu principles and urban European high culture. The school's ideals took form alongside Tagore's involvement in the Swadeshi movement, which successfully defended Bengal against early partition by the British administration. Tagore, unlike Ghandi, promoted the empowerment of Indians through localised adjustment, as opposed to top-down legislative change. In terms of education, this meant focusing on the economic and cultural needs of a specific area, and fermenting an atmosphere of cooperative learning between community members and international outsiders. The practice of this 40 year project, outlined below, was funded by means which rendered it independent of the colonial administration. A self-imposed tax, collected by a network of villages; and agricultural bank; international fundraising and the development of marketable skills as a central part of the curriculum all helped keep the project going. In addition, practical help was requested from various state and international organisations, such as the Ministry of Public Health. Santiniketan, the school, grew into Visva-Bharati, the university, which still exists today – but the project never became a movement. Between Tagore's death in 1941 and the partition of India in 1947, the efforts outlined below were either co-opted by the government or ceased activity. What follows is an outline of how the educational ideals of Tagore operated in practice.

> From the outset, our aim was to awaken the villagers from their slumber and enable them to be self-reliant, self sufficient and economically independent.
> – *Leonard Elmhirst.*

The Institute for Rural Reconstruction, also known as Sriniketan ('the Abode of Plenty'), was established in 1922 as an educational facility in the Bengal village of Surul. The district had been an outpost for the East India Company until their relocation in 1835, at which point the area began to spiral into poverty and social disintegration. In 1922, following the opening of Visva-Bharati university in nearby Shantiniketan, Tagore purchased a small farm in Surul, and sent a team of ten students, two Japanese carpenters and an Anglo-American agronomist called Leonard Elmhirst to create an Institute. Their brief was to conduct a systematic and detailed study of the village, rather than foist a ready-made system designed to fit every town and village in India. The project was initiated with awkwardness and inefficiency, the locals suspicious of the privileged outsiders who seemed unusually interested in their lives. Within 6 months, the team had identified impoverishment of the soil, endemic starvation, emaciated farm animals, malaria-infested jungles, dilapidated buildings and temples, a culture of suspicion and mistrust between the inhabitants, poverty, and the drain of brains from Surul to Calcutta. In addition, there were very few community activities undertaken, and no co-operation between villagers.

Over the following decade, the small team grew into a group comprising scores of foreigners and Bengalis. In addition to inaugurating a series of agricultural reforms, festivals, celebrations, markets and so on, numerous educational programmes were introduced to

the village. Firstly, day and night schools were held for children. These were linked to nearby Shantiniketan and Visva-Bharati, which rejected the Western curriculum imposed by the British. Instead, in classes run by teachers and practitioners, boys and girls were exposed to a combination of technical skills, natural sciences and the arts. As an example, a male student of 8 or 9 years old would be taught to make and sell sun-dried mud bricks, cotton looms, vegetable dye, or to raise poultry. Through this work, largely conducted outside, students would be trained in geology, mathematics, botany, bacteriology or agricultural sciences. In addition, literacy in English and Sanskrit would be taught through exposure to English and Indian literature, with an emphasis on performance and recitation. At first, girls received an education that left them subordinated to the typical domestic roles of rural women; until they reached university, focus was put on their learning weaving and cookery. However, the Mahila Samities – Women's Association – came to play a considerable role in the economic and social welfare of the community. From 1936, Mahila Samities were very active in Bolpur, Bandhgora, Bhubandanga, Surul and Goalpara. Information, education and communication material were prepared and distributed among the villagers for creating awareness and to develop a sense of solidarity. Indira Ghandi is perhaps the most famous female student of the Institute. As well as the creation of schools, a Bengali equivalent of the Scout movement was formed. Boys in the village were taught to organise into a corps to fight fires, combat malaria epidemics, fundraise and provide personnel for social events, or assist with repairs on damaged infrastructure. In addition, a Home Project was assigned to each student at the school; while at home working for their family, they were expected to begin an independent business, however small – the manufacture of condiments, straw sandals, cotton wicks and so forth, which they could sell to support their communities. They would be visited at home by teachers and tradesmen, whose role was to foster the skills and relationships necessary for the children to become independent earners.

Practice

Coupled to the programme available to farmers – for instance, a 'Demonstration Plot' was available to all in the village, who could learn modern agronomic techniques from international specialists – the Institute sought to "take the problem of the village to the classroom for study and the experimental farm for solution." The institute ended with Tagore's death in 1941, and was deemed at best a quaint experiment by the Independence movement, who took elements of the project and blended them with the Basic Training which they made mandatory to school children after Independence in 1947. The project moved with Leonard Elmhirst to Dartington village in the UK, where it became famous. Before he died, Tagore came to view the Srinitekan project as having drifted from its original intent, with the involvement of experts causing fragmentation and a weak sense of unity between the Institute and the villagers. Nonetheless, the infrastructure, prosperity and community of the villagers was markedly improved – the festivals and markets inaugurated in the 1920's are still held today, and the university of Visva-Bharati attracts students from around the world.

Reflection

It was noted that, although the majority of educators are female, a large proportion of texts, movements and theories are often attributed to men. In Tagore's case, 'his' institutes – although his involvement was crucial – were created and maintained by a team of hundreds of teachers, scientists, volunteers and their families. Leonard Elmhirst's wife, Dorothy, for instance, largely funded

the Institute of Rural Reconstruction. In 1922, Tagore's daughter-in-law, Pratima Devi introduced lac work, calico printing and batik work to the Institute, in a small room with tin roof called the Bichitra Studio. In addition, the complexity of the programme, which sought to create a bridge between Western industrial modernism and rural India, saw attempted communication between British Officials, high and low, local farmers, children, public figures and politicians, potential donors, educationalists, Christian missionaries, artists and writers, agricultural scientists, zamindars, Tagore's family, education staff at Shantiniketan, non-cooperators and Gandhians, among others. All belonged partially to each other's camps; none could entirely encompass all. Perhaps it would be helpful to consider Tagore as a logo, behind which an inspiring cultural phenomenon can be examined – albeit a neglected one in current conversations about independence struggles. In schools today, dissidents are often presented as individualist, entrepreneurial figures to whom students can aspire; Martin Luther King or Che Guevara strike poses, refuse subordination and propose models of mass reform – it would be harder to put a postcard of the Institute of Rural Reconstruction on a classroom door. It was noted during our talk that the modern Conservative ideal of the Big Society, where the state withdraws its support and expects 'the Community' to look after itself, has a similar terminology to some of the educational principles outlined by Tagore. It could also be argued that the ideals of the project have been taken over by the free market to exploit regions after the withdrawal of colonial powers. Today, there are numerous 'Institutes for Rural Reconstruction' – NGOs under the influence of private companies and international interests, using rhetoric of autonomy to capitalise on the needs of locals hoping to provide a high quality of life for themselves. In answer to these concerns, it is important to make clear that Shantiniketan, Visva-Bharati and Sriniketan was neither an outright rejections of state support, nor a top-down intervention by the forces of the administration. Instead, efforts were made to enable a particular village – Surul – to end its history of subordination and impoverishment and establish a more dignified relationship with the rest of India, and the world.

COLLECTIVITY

Although written forty years ago in the dynamic storm of the 1970's second wave of feminist action and debate, both The Tyranny of Structurelessness by Jo Freeman and The Tyranny of Tyranny[1] by Cathy Levine continue to circulate today in print and online editions. Both texts have their origin in the enduring discussion and often heated arguments centered around the question How do we organise politically?

Rather than simply posing the question of why do we organise, these texts bridge both socialist feminist and anarcha-feminist camps, attempting a practical investigation of what a non-elitist, non-patriarchal revolutionary organising might look like. Neither the socialist nor anarchist movements could be said to be free of elitist and patriarchal ways of doing politics and this was at the very heart of both Tyranny texts' insistence on questioning the 'how'.

The most famous quote from Levine's text was that 'men tend to organise the way they fuck – one big rush then that 'wham slam, thank you maam'. In other words, with all the theoretical answers about revolution posed by men, Levine questioned whether they could organise the everyday slow, often mundane work of politics? Could they organise the processes of listening and dialogue?

Could they even just make the tea and not feel the need to articulate complex but often abstract theoretical truths?

Freeman's The Tyranny of Structurelessness arises at a point when women-only consciousness raising groups needed to direct themselves into on-the-ground movement building. She writes that groups without a sense of democratic structuring often have hidden power bases, foster elites and tend to thus be politically 'impotent'. Freeman outlines certain principles for organising – delegation of internal authority, transparency of information, task rotation, open discussion etc.
Levine's more anarchist response is sisterly but also sceptical and even scathing – 'what we definitely don't need is more structures and rules, providing us with easy answers'. Levine argues that consciousness-raising would always remain a vital part of any movement-making and would not be something to now leave behind in favour of numbers and strength. She writes that a mass movement itself does not make a revolution. What would be lost in this mass model would be the movement's own personality, its local autonomy, its long fought decoding of internal power relations and its own sense of culture. She ends with a call to re-evaluate anarchism as a mode of practice with a nod to radical feminism as the best example of the ethos that anarchism preaches.

Black Frog is a squatted centre in Camberwell, South London. Every Monday night at 7pm is an open meeting to organise the building, deal with problems, discuss forthcoming events and to eat together. The meetings are open to anyone who wants to take part. Often people who are traveling through London come to the meetings. Their voices and ideas are just as important as anyone else's.

1. The meeting begins with everyone sharing food around a table. Someone will ask everyone present for items to be put on agenda for the meeting. This person usually reads through the agenda item by item and facilitates the discussion. Facilitation is not always easy and needs to be practiced. Each person speaks in the order that they have signaled although the facilitator might let small counterpoints or arguments happen if they feel it will help the discussion. The facilitator keeps track of who will speak next. They need to be aware of people dominating the discussion, people who haven't spoken, the energy of the item under discussion and also of the meeting itself. They must also interject to move items on if they are taking too much time. It is also important to keep track of practical suggestions that have been lost in the discussions and to make sure that they are brought back in. Another vital task is to make sure latecomers are brought into the meeting space around the table and not left physically outside the debates.

2. Decisions are made by consensus. Something that cannot be agreed by all will not happen but will come up again at a later meeting. Usually there is a way to find consensus through dialogue.

3. Another person takes notes on the discussion including who has volunteered for which job or task. They will write up the notes and make sure everyone gets a copy.

4. Facilitating or taking the notes often means that it is impossible to speak in the discussions.

5. These notes of this meeting will be gone over at the start of the next meeting to follow up on who has done what.

Reflection

The Black Frog meetings sometimes lasted three hours. They were always passionate, argumentative, painstakingly slow, funny but rigorous. Despite the arguments and occasional outbursts, there was a lot of love in the room. Sometimes this only came out when the meeting was over with a few hugs. Three hours is a lot of time to put in on a weekly basis especially when you have a full time job. People thought that this way of organising a space meant that this time was worth the effort.
Organising this space with a long background in anarchist and feminist movements meant that we were familiar with and happy to take insights from both Tyranny texts. Neither one nor the other argument dominated. Things do have to be transparent. Tasks do have to be rotated. Elites or alliances are part of group dynamics. They have to be understood and dissolved. There is no quick way to do this.
With this in mind, not speaking in a meeting due to facilitating or note-taking is something you have to get used to. The same can be said when sometimes some things have not been done as promised. That's just the way it is – for this is not a 'job' and we are not 'staff'. We want to organise from the depths of affinity and love and to involve all those rebels who wish to organise in this way or who wish to learn, experience and contribute to this way of organising.

DOUBT IN GROUPS

History

This is an exercise that deals with doubt. It is from the Royal Court Theatre Young Writers' Programme and it turns doubt into possibility. It works with any type of group, with all specialties and ages. Not just playwrights. All it takes is a cake-tin and some scraps of paper. Each participant writes two doubts about a subject on scraps of paper and puts them in the tin. The facilitator then spreads them all across a table, and asks the group to tick any they've experienced themselves. Those scraps with the most ticks are discussed first. Once the exercise is underway, the facilitator just keeps an eye on the pace, asks questions about the doubts, encourages conversation across the group and makes sure everyone gets a chance to speak. This exercise lets the class learn from each other. The facilitator is therefore encouraged to share their own doubts.

Practice

Let's cross over to our group now. They're a group of twenty young playwrights, and they've just put their doubts about their first drafts in the tin. Say hello.

CLASS: Hello!

FACILITATOR: Now. I'm going to spread all our doubts across the table. Come have a look. If you see someone else's and agree with it, just tick it, OK?

[The class spend a few minutes ticking the doubts. There is some laughter and murmurs of recognition].

FACILITATOR: Now, let's re-arrange them. Those with the most ticks up that end, those with the least down there. Gather round. Ok, so this is the most common doubt. Looks like all of us have marked it. *[reads]* 'My characters aren't strong enough.' Anyone want to start?

JAMES: I think I'm not strong enough yet.

FACILITATOR: What, for your life or for your writing?

JAMES: For my characters really. Like, to give them proper dialogue.

FACILITATOR: Anyone else feel that?

SADIQ: I dunno. Nah. I can make em talk. But they don't do anything. They just sit around the kitchen table.

FACILITATOR: Anybody else?

ESTELLE: What Sadiq just said, I think … uh Sadiq.

SADIQ: Yeah.

ESTELLE: You said make, right? You said make my characters talk? Do you remember that thing about trusting the characters?

SADIQ: Yeah but you've got to have rules.

FACILITATOR: I think you're both right. What are you saying Estelle?

ESTELLE: When Caryl Churchill came in, she said that a story fails because the characters get oppressed by the writer. By a nervous writer.

SADIQ: I don't get what that means.

DAPHNE: I don't know what my characters want either.

FACILITATOR: Do you want to say more Daphne?

DAPHNE: I know that 'I am who I am cause of what I want'. But just because I know that, it doesn't make it easier to write dialogue

FACILITATOR: Yep. You're right. Anyone?

JAMES: Pinter used to write down the things people said on the bus.

ESTELLE: Yeah I do that on the 149.

TOR: You can tell a lot about what people want from how they talk on the bus.

CLASS: Yeah.

DAPHNE: Do you know what your characters want?

FACILITATOR: Yeah, it takes me ages though. Normally I have to write a few drafts before I can see.

TOR: Do you know what we want?

FACILITATOR: I think we all spend too much time lying about it! Let's move on. We can spend time talking about characters again in the next session. The next doubt is [reads] *'The Ending'*. So how do we get to the end? Anyone want to kick off this discussion?

Reflection

That's enough from the class for now. We talked for about an hour about the doubts, but it could have been 3 hours. There were 20 people in this class and a lot of them had similar anxieties. We got all of them out in the open, as honestly as possible. At the end, people no longer felt so overwhelmed by their weak characters, or of the end of their plays. Most of the teaching came from other class members. The group realised that everyone has common doubts, and that they all have solutions, so long as they are shared rather than ignored. This makes the heroic, lonely struggle appear as the myth that it is. People in groups have more power than individuals acting alone, so long as the individuals and the group find a way to support each other. This exercise works in a different way to having an individual lecture to a docile crowd.

I don't always trust groups. There is too much murk between people that I don't understand. Ideology can start to seep in and cover up the truth. That's why I write theatre. The theatre is for groups of people who are also individuals. To conclude, this is an exercise that says it's about doubts but is also about power – specifically, about social status and knowledge. My challenge is to learn how power works and how it passes between me and the others.

DEMOCRACY IN SCHOOLS

> Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education.
> *Freire 1970 :74*

In schools in the radical democratic tradition – such as Summerhill (UK), Leipzig Free School (Germany) and The Albany Free School (US) – school meetings, where the children and teachers come together on equal terms to discuss and decide how they organise as a school community, are a central component of their philosophy. Away from state control, these 'democratic schools' seek to support the children and young people in exercising greater autonomy over, and understanding of, their lives: to help them see the world not as something static, but as something they can interact with and change.

Radical educators have long been critical of the way traditional schooling limits the autonomy of the child in this sense. In the eighteenth century, William Godwin advocated the rights of children, speaking out about the coercion and deception that he viewed as characteristic of adult interactions with them. The anarchist educator Francisco Ferrer asserted that in traditional schooling, 'Children must be accustomed to obey, to think, according to the social dogmas which govern us'. (Smith 1983:89). Whilst in his critique, A. S. Neill told of the need for schools in producing a 'slave mentality' in order to reproduce the existing social system.

So what does it mean to be a democratic school? Although existing on the fringes, there are schools like this all over the world and how they interpret democracy can vary. In my own experience of working with children of primary age in a small democratic school, it translates into the children having much more freedom over what they do and how and when they do it. There's no national curriculum to adhere to, and no external motivations such as rewards or sanctions are used to make the children yield to the expectations of the adult.

Inevitably then there is a renegotiation of the teacher – pupil relationship, yet as Neill reminds us, freedom is not the same as giving licence. Treating freedom as synonymous with licence means we risk handing all the power to the children: a situation that benefits no-one. In considering the power dynamic between the adults and the children, Smith's description of the libertarian approach resonates with my experience,

> …the abandonment of a fixed, one-style, managerial-type relationship between teacher and pupil loosens relationships generally and makes them more interactive. Relationships become a matter of individual negotiation within parameters set by the group. They become the expression of a group dynamic which itself is the product of a set of individual dynamics. Libertarians see this as a truer social base than one resulting from a teacher-imposed order. (1983:98)

In our school, in those situations where adults still play key roles, such as facilitating meetings and assisting in conflict resolution (due to the children all being lower/mid primary age), the general 'abandonment' of the traditional teacher-pupil role in the school allows greater opportunity for a two-way dialogue between adult and child.

School meetings attended by children and adults play a crucial role in building day-to-day cohesion and understanding between us as individuals; it is where agreements are made on how we share the space in a way that everyone feels safe. It is a forum for all those participating to: let others know what they plan to do that day; make any announcements they feel the school community needs to be made aware of; to make decisions about how we use the space; share news and bring up concerns, including issues that relate to existing school agreements or to individuals. Agreements change as circumstances change and people, be it child or adult, bring new perspectives to the issue. We have found many situations where fixed rules are unhelpful since they carry the threat of taking priority over human beings: ignoring the nuances of our interactions. With some natural interjection, children and adults speak in meetings in the order they raised their hands rather than being invited or given permission to by the teacher.

We work mainly by consensus, talking issues through until no one has any strong objections, rather than by majority voting. Though sometimes we will agree to have a vote on a particular issue. This often leaves me feeling uneasy as the children experience voting as a competition that often leaves the 'losers' feeling bitter and the 'winners' triumphant.

Discussions are stimulated by the experiences of those in the meeting. Heated debates about fairness crop up incessantly. The children listen to and learn from each other, they give advice and support to others who express difficulties. They begin to empathise and consider that there may be deeper causes to antagonistic behaviours. In one meeting, a 7-year old urged us all to consider that one of her peers may be going through a hard time and to bear this in mind when responding to his recent aggression towards both children and adults.

In meetings it is agreed that everyone can do things that don't distract others from the meeting. So whilst making funny noises is out, drawing is in. The quality of the artwork produced by the children, whilst still engaged in the discussion, makes me wonder about all the creativity that gets suppressed as children 'sit up nicely on the carpet, looking this way'.

That the children have more autonomy in deciding how to spend their time at school means they are encouraged to follow their interests and gives time to develop their passions. Again the mind turns to thinking about traditional schooling: alas, how many talents or natural abilities fall by the wayside or are never discovered because they are not valued in the conventional classroom? An awful lot of time is spent there after all. Surely schools should be places where children and young people have time to explore and develop their passions, and where they feel supported in fulfilling their potential along these lines?

Althusser (1971:7) identifies the education system as being part of the ideological state apparatus, which teaches knowledge and skills in a way that ensures subjection to the ruling ideology. This evokes a common criticism of alternative schools – 'Yes, it all sounds very nice, but how do they get on once they leave school?' In other words, how do young people 'get on' having not internalised the ruling ideology via the education system? Such schools don't exist in a vacuum and so to suggest that those who attend them escape the ruling ideology completely would be absurd. Though certainly to experience an education that goes against the grain in this way can bring with it the unsettling realisation that life is indeed not like that. But this negates the fact that alternative education seeks to be transformative.

Whilst the aims of democratic schools oppose what Smith (1983:108) calls the 'lesson in dependency' taught by social institutions, it remains that many schools that exist within this tradition are private. Thus, despite employing radical pedagogies they remain rooted in the undemocratic stratification of education. As democratic schools challenge society's norms, Alan Block argues that 'the system permits alternative schools to exist and minimises their effect by marginalising them' (1994: 67). This can mean they struggle financially and / or find themselves constantly having to defend their educational approach.

Many state schools now have some kind of student/ school council, however the degree to which these give any real voice to the student body can be contested. There can be little doubt that the current neo-liberal plans for education will further seek to restrict opportunities for socially critical learning and democratisation within schools. Getting 'student voice' in order to tick

boxes and decide the colour of the walls in the toilets is not the same as including students in any meaningful decision-making over their own lives: where young people can say what they really think rather than what school management expect them to say. Educators must be cautious against encouraging a false sense of empowerment. Colin Ward (1995: 131) recalls a BBC film on the financial crisis of the London Zoo, where a director, using what Ward called 'management speak' had this to say about the workforce" 'Once you've given them empowerment you've got them in the grinder'. In his lecture, Ward warned that governments apply similar 'management speak' to teachers. I suggest this same rhetoric is being used to pacify young people.

Ultra-red **are a**

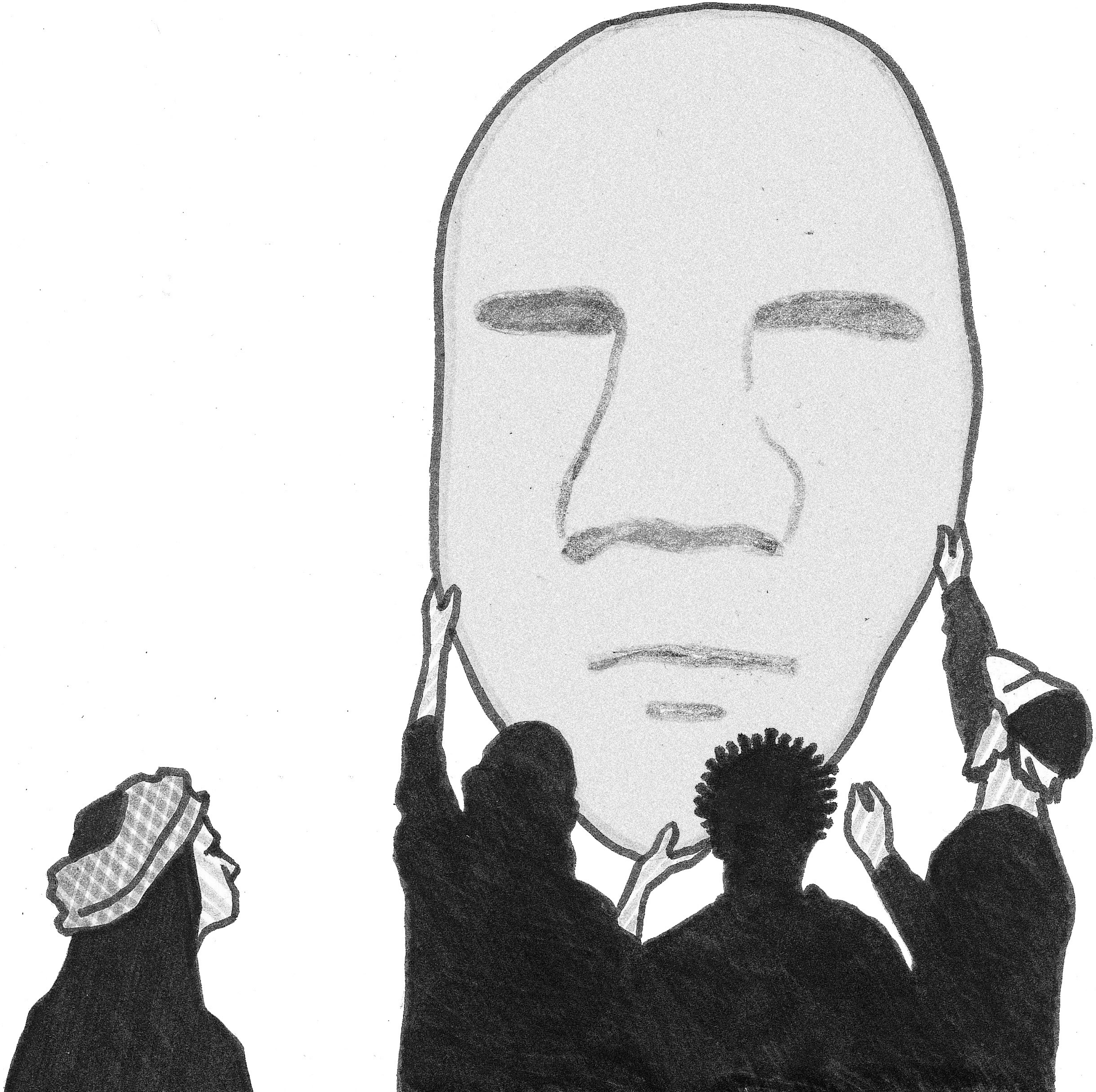
sound-based art and political collective founded in 1994 by two AIDS activists. Originally based in Los Angeles, the collective has expanded over the years with members across North America and Europe. Members in Ultra-red range from artists, researchers, and organizers from different social movements including the struggles of migration, anti-racism, participatory community development, and the politics of HIV/AIDS. In 2008 they began working explicitly with practices of popular education, setting up learning experiments for students, artists, and community organisers under the name the School of Echoes.

www.ultra-red.org

Radical Education Forum

is a group of people working in a wide range of educational settings in the UK. We meet monthly to discuss radical pedagogical theories and techniques, and contemporary issues of interest to those involved or interested in education. We explore and enact how these theories and questions can inform our practice. The Forum supports social justice in education, linking practitioners within mainstream educational institutions, community education initiatives, social movements, arts organisations, and self-organised groups.

radicaleducationforum.tumblr.com



Aesthetic as pedagogical processes

Emilio Fantin

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In my artistic practice, which I call 'experience,' I experiment and make art by studying, re- searching and practicing with other people. My approach to pedagogy is empiric and leads me to analyze social, political and existential aspects of being.

The concept of 'individual' is at the very core of our culture. To be an individual means to affirm the idea of autonomy and freedom by taking responsibility for our actions and choices. Individuality is an important step in the evolution of human consciousness, as it frees us from any form of dependency from religious and cultural dogmas. We can choose what to be, what to believe in, what to do. On the other hand, in the name of individualism, we forget to be part of a community. The current educational system and, partly, how the curriculum is organized seem to orientate students towards competition as a way to reinforce their self-esteem.

In my artistic practice, which I call 'experience,' I try to create a space of sharing, a space for 'conversation.' In a conversation, anyone can speak, be silent, or even interrupt someone else.

I try to extend this condition to actions. Sometimes the process of conversation, either in words or in actions, can be appreciated and perceived aesthetically. That's why I like to talk about the 'art of conversation' and 'aesthetic of process'.

In an artistic conversation, participants experience the beauty of a pause, the dramatic tension of a contradiction, the courage of an assertion, the pleasure of a shared feeling. They discover that their self-respect does not come from convincing someone else, but rather from contributing to the conversation and reaching a common 'state of grace'.

Between words and interruptions, restarts and counterpoints, if we are able to shift our aesthetic sense from a stable form to a dynamic process, we can easily understand the necessity to take the others into account. We understand that communication exists only because of the presence of the 'other.' The subject of the scene is not the speaker but the 'conversation'. The equivalence between subject and individual falters and we have the intuition of being singular plural, as Jean Luc Nancy says.

A LIVING BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rather than entering into the space of others, it is necessary to leave a free space that can be filled with interpretation and imagination.

The Socratic approach demands an effort of interpretation and reconstruction on the part of listeners to bring out their own imaginative, analytical and intuitive qualities.

Let us consider, for example, the lectures of Roland Barthes at the College de France, in which he gives rise to a space that is open to interpretation, without following a consequential order, but. Barthes proceeds through rhizomatic thinking, as opposed to hierarchical, linear thinking that complies with rigid binary categories. He extracts certain words from novels by great authors and allows a discussion in which connections, suggestions, and analogies are interpreted and reassembled in an always-fluid, ever-changing context.

Unlike Barthes, whose lectures were intended for an academic context, I was fortunate to be able to experiment with possibilities for a rhizomatic way of thinking in Free Home University.

As an exercise, I invited everyone to create a 'bibliography.' How do we select books? Most of the time we are driven by a sense of pragmatism, taking a functional approach in order to arrive quickly at the heart of our investigation. We proceed along a linear and logical sequence of choices, thereby missing unexpected events, surprises and helpful errors. This is a moment to let go of our rational attitudes and follow what we might call intuition, meaningful coincidences, or chance.

The challenge in this is to create a personal way of approaching books, finding ways for books to 'call and choose us', rather than deciding in advance what authors or titles we will use. It doesn't really matter what kind of books are found. What is most important is to explore the possibilities of experiencing this encounter as an unpredictable moment. Once books have chosen us, we can let some words emerge, and try to unveil everyday political or ideological meanings that these words have assumed and look for new interpretations.

Our experiment concerned and was embedded in daily life. In this unorthodox way, we chose very different and strange books, but then each of us was able to find relationships, signs, allusions, evocations related to the theme of death/ life.

A 'living bibliography' that may enable us to walk the path of knowledge through our own representations and imagination.

THE RITUAL SPACE OF THE WORD

According to Heidegger *'Logic concerns logos ... logic is, therefore for us, not a drill for a bet- ter or worse method of thought. ....'*

Through logic we are able to articulate our language to the outer limit of what is imaginable and thinkable. What do we find beyond? It is the logos that comprehends the thinkable and the not-thinkable. Logos is the communicating and the object/subject communicated, it is the communication of existence.

Without ignoring the differences and the singularities. Essence brings us to the realm of the sacrum in which actions, words and relation- ships are framed in ritual spaces. It is in the context of rituality that language and pedagogy find their profound interconnection. The lack of awareness towards understanding pedagogy in this way is what produces a sclerotic language, deprived of its essence and vital force. A word displaced from its ritual space easily becomes an instrument for different purposes, sometimes a strategy for manipulation, ambiguity and misunderstanding.

We have to take into account social, geographical, and above all, historical coordinates, by connecting words to our roots. It is dangerous to ignore this dynamic, as language becomes banal as a result, and loses its thaumaturgic quality of creating a ritual space.

Translation is a powerful pedagogical practice that requires being engaged with the other.

DYNAMICS OF PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS

What could pedagogy bring to the social con- text? How could it impact the behavior of an individual in a community, and how might a pedagogical approach produce a sense of harmony by balancing different roles people have within the community? Only those who are committed to exploring the field of learning/ pedagogy and have respect for others, who are generous in offering experience and talents, as well as being humble enough to listen deeply to everyone without prejudice may be able to answer these questions.

The lack of criticality and self-reflection in the educational system, the lack of freedom, is intentionally designed as a political instrument. We witness a deliberate imposition on the child of a model of life based on the logic of automatism and the idea of professionalism, which does not allow the child to develop his/ her/ their sensitivity. This approach produces people that easily follow rules, and become subdued, renouncing or not developing certain ideals, symbols and imaginaries. Also, a teacher must know the principles of childhood development and the different phases of her/his/ their growing process, taking into account that each phase of growing has its own quality and particularity.

A human being should be seen as a whole in which the physical boundaries of the body have an osmotic function. Pedagogy has to take into account the relation between inner and outer, reconnecting the individual to the wholeness of all else that exists, and helping the individual consciousness evolve. Rudolf Steiner's approach, for example, understands children's growing phases in terms of a gradual development of different constitutive parts of the being-in-becoming in cycles of seven years. In this dynamic, if there is a premature appeal to rational, logical thinking, then the imaginative faculties become rigid and representations remain fixed and mechanical. One doesn't need to be an ex- pert in physiology to look at a child playing and perceive the forces generated by imagination. This is not only a process of learning, but also an aesthetic expression of the process of knowledge.

As an artist, I attempt to improve knowledge about the human being that arise from the relationship between matter and spirit manifests itself as beauty.

Emilio Fantin **is an**

artist working on the dematerialization of art as his individual research and on the concept of organism in collective experiences. He has been carrying on research about the structure of sharing art practices for many years, focusing on behavioral and philosophical approaches. At present, he is working on multidisciplinary researches to study the relationship between art and agriculture, art and mathematical logic, art and dreams, and art and architecture. He has participated in important contemporary art events (the Venice Biennale, I; Performa07, NY, USA; Le Magasin, Grenoble, F; Neue Galerie, Graz, A; Documenta XIII, Kassell, D). Since 2005, he has taught at the Politecnico, School of Architecture and Society, University of Milano and is also one of the coordinators of the "Osservatorio Public Art", and was one of the artists co-designing many sessions of Free Home University from its inception.



In The Cracks of Learning (Situating Us)

Alessandra Pomarico

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The article also appeared at artseverywhere.ca

[1—21] footnotes of this text are at pp. 170—173

As a preamble, I'd like to clarify that everything I attempt to contribute in this text on the subject of pedagogy is a recollection of ideas that have been collectively produced and experienced through convivial gatherings, dialogues, inquiries, critical reflections, readings, and actions with many friends with whom I experimented in various processes of creating communities of learners.[1] From each of their voices and presences, different perspectives and talents, urgencies and desires, I learned how the 'pedagogical process' can unfold and impact us intellectually, emotionally, bodily, both individually and as social and political subjects, leading to the possibility of transformation. I am not an expert, nor a theorist or specialist in the discipline; I have experienced (at both sides of the classroom) the traditional institutional higher education system, as well as a deschooled, unlearning, creative environment. I also have experienced a mix between the two, when it was possible to include an experiential and 'unconferenced' approach in a formal context, as some institutions are developing an interest in the so-called 'third pedagogy.'

I am an 'educated' white woman from the global North, who enjoys the process of learning as an important part of self and collective emancipation, and considers knowledge production as a fundamental component of a healthy society. With the privilege of means and time, I am committed to co-creating spaces where investigations are possible, where people can bring their stories and various tools to the service of an emerging collective, a community of seekers and creators, involved in building an alternative, more just, ecological, and not necessarily anthropocentric world, outside of capitalistic relations. It is urgent to study, to learn, to practice, to prepare our selves to attempt this task. We need to know that we don't know, to un-learn in order to learn, and to re-learn with others; in the disruptive process of re-imagining, taking into account the pedagogical process is crucial. The formation of temporary autonomous zones[2] of learning is a constitutional step for the change we are called upon to produce, in times of social and environmen¬al catastrophe. It is in this larger framework to question and fight a system that is threatening live hood everywhere, that I consider the question of pedagogy seminal in our times of struggle, and it is in the legacy of those that have attempted justice and equity through a "pedagogy of the oppressed" that I hope to inscribe my search, with gratitude and admiration for all who, in the present as in the past, contribute to the creation of those emancipatory and transformative learning spaces.

RENAMING THE WORLD, LEARNING TO DEFEND AND CREATE LIFE

The human being, as far as we know, is the only species born in intentionally linguistic communities, language being that peculiar superstructure that creates and reproduces the 'deontic powers'[3] around which our civilization is organized. The act of naming, which informs ways of thinking, is not neutral and is based on stratifications of conventions that are historically determined. Our language contains assumptions and continually reproduces the worldview it projects. This is, in a sense, the paradox that literacy and pedagogy share, as the latter can be the very discipline that reiterates a vertical, authoritarian experience, and, at the same time, offers the possibility of emancipation, freedom, and justice.
When arguing that it is urgent to rethink the education system (reforming it would not be enough), we are stating the necessity of a radical shift that may occur through the creation of a different language, opening up a new imaginary from which different narratives can arise.

If we take a trip into the archeology of meanings, in the context of the Western history of educational institutions, the semantic and epistemological structures that inform pedagogy (mostly focused on the act of teaching rather than the process of learning) imply an uneven relationship between the ones who 'know' and the ones who don't, leading to an intrinsically violent approach for the sake of 'shaping,' 'instructing,' 'training,' 'developing' the ignorant. We can find many examples in most verbs and nouns related to education that reveal the nature and structure of teaching as an asymmetrical process of knowledge transfer.[4] **Foucault** included schools (together with prisons and mental hospitals) among the institutionnes totales erected to repress and control the social system, through which so many physical, psychological, emotional, cognitive, and cultural traumas have been perpetuated and oppression has been reproduced. The Residential Schools in Canada are a perfect example of this apparatus, where the systematic repression of indigenous language, culture, and cosmogony, together with physical violence inflicted upon First Nation communities, have exterminated and deeply wounded them, and continues to harmfully impact society at large.
Language has a quintessential role in any attempt to decolonize the production of culture, the educational institutions, and the pedagogical process. In some indige¬nous native languages, only a collective subject exists: the 'we' form, which means that people always speak from and including the community. Let us simply take into consideration what a dramatic change in the entire system of social relations was brought about by the introduction of the 'I' person, as well as the relative concept of individual interest, which was a product of Spanish/European colonization.

Even without these extreme examples of cultural genocide, many educators consider what some call the modern 'factory schools'—with their principles of 'common core,' 'skills and competencies,' and standardized curricula and evaluations—as ways to imprison students' imagination, in¬struct them to accept social rules/roles without questioning, and direct their choices toward the current marketplace. Furthermore, when we use a language built on class, racial, gender or sexual bias, the assumptions and misconceptions encoded in words become internalized and are reproduced.

Thus, the question is: how can the metaphorical nature of language support a paradigmatic shift toward pedagogical relations that refuses to reproduce oppressive, patriarchal, extractive, colonial patterns?

How can we allow the emergence of a counter-narrative, a space for a political and biological process of resilience? Could pedagogy be a way to learn how to rename-rebirth the world?

The way we learn today is very much related to the way we live under the capitalistic paradigm, where the production of knowledge is a financial enterprise. When we analyze the model of American universities, exported around the globe, it becomes clear that these institutions function as corporations, organized around private financial forces and structurally propagating debt that students will take an average of twenty to thirty years to repay. If the right to study is the right to be free and have access to equal possibilities, it seems now that only a few are able to have it, and at long-lasting cost. The right to be educated, central in welfare social policies, is today the right to contract debt, or one might say the freedom to become a slave as a chain of debt is voluntarily created. For some, this is clearly a larger strategy of subjugation, and it is one of the reasons why students today end up being depoliticized as they 'manage' their lives around debt and their academic career as a business, their education thereby becoming another commodity.**[5]**

How do we avoid the reductive, binary thinking that creates disciplined and passive individuals, in service to the hegemonic system, leading us and the planet to a permanent state of crisis and destruction? How can we create a post-neoliberal education—one that resists the principle of profit, extraction, competitiveness, and exploitation? The crisis that neoliberal forces will continuously generate is also a crisis of the imagination: we seem unable to think and even dream about the possibility to live differently, forced to function in a system embedded in almost every aspect of our lives. 'Being aware of the gravity of the current situation, the question about education or learning changes radically. Learning is translated into survival, learning to learn in a context of war is fundamentally 'learning to defend and create life.'**[6]**

We have to create spaces, no matter how temporary—since their autonomous, non-institutionalized nature may dissolve and reform elsewhere—in which we can experi¬ment with other types of relationships, re-appropriating our material and immaterial conditions, as ways toward the communalization of life. We also need to think about pedagogy relationally, promoting more generative, inclusive, and coalitional learning. Early radical theorists such as Freire, Dewey, and Illich considered education central in the preparation for a systemic change in society, pre-cognizing in their visions the cause-and-effect of industrial and postindustrial mentalities, resulting in 'the end of the world as we know it.'**[7]**

As criticism is easily re-absorbed by the system (**Rancière** suggests that 'nothing else is left to criticize'**[8]**) we need to be creative in organizing another set of principles, testing our powers to be together and to transform collectively. Critical and radical pedagogies—oppositional knowledge, militant and convivial research,**[9]** insurgent autonomous zones of knowledge production, inquiries in solidarity—are not only tools to frame our analysis on an intellectual and theoretical level. They are calls to action: to plant seeds, to cross-pollinate, to imagine what is not there yet. They reclaim a collective desire to re-engage the world, *preguntando caminamos* (asking, we walk) as the **Zapatistas** would say, in an invitation to proceed—in our paths, research, or struggle—always posing questions, making queries, investigating. We need to embolden ourselves, overcome our own disillusion and skepticism, create spaces not

only to contest, but also to take care and hope, to realize 'a new topography of the possible' (with **Rancière** again).[10] Spaces for reflection, imagination, practice. A utopian gesture is needed, not to project into an ideal future, but in the here and now. It is already happen¬ing: a maybe invisible and gentle planetary revolution, 'an unfolding insurrection.'[11] Many people are resisting, creating viable alternatives, experimenting with forms of living based on mutual support, assuming responsibility for the regeneration of their communities. Reclaiming the right to a different way of being, going back to the essential question of what it means to be human.

FROM THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE COLLECTIVE, TO THE COMMON

To nurture a different pedagogy is one of the ways to counteract the dominant culture of destruction, the ontology of consumerism, the political apathy of our times. To create spaces for a plurality of voices, learning within diverse sociocultural groups, from different traditions, languages, and personal stories, acknowledging our positions and privileges; to deconstruct predetermined structures and reflect on how we gather, how we organize time, space, resources, and communication, how we deal with expectations, how we make decisions, how we proceed in our inquiries; to exercise non-vertical structures—and by this I don't mean having to erase the pedagogical differences that promote learning, but enabling each one in the process to occupy the position of guiding; to learn, intergenerationally, transversally, and without compartmentalizing disciplines, avoiding professionalism becoming a divide. These and many other challenges await us when we engage actively in a process of learning with others.

Learning requires taking risks, passing through disruption, stretching boundaries, going beyond our limits, building patience. It takes effort and courage to open up to others, to include conflict, to recognize commonalities and core differences, to build trust, to venture into the unknown and the uneasy. It can be painful to share an open-ended process: we may critically reflect without ever actually undermining the system of rules and utilitarian ways we inhabit, without letting go of our habits and control, without relinquishing the pre-¬made tools that govern our thinking and are supposed to facilitate our gatherings. It is especially difficult to balance the sense of individuality and collectivity; it involves negotiations, even within ourselves, and an ability to share our own fragility. We need practice, we need discipline to be undisciplined, trusting that the process will open up something powerful and beautiful and magical.

One question is how to invite our selves and others into those 'brave spaces.'[12] Rather than producing the illusion of safe spaces, we are going to expose ourselves to strong emotions, ruptures, contradiction and conflicts as natural outcomes of our different views. If it involves some suffering, this type of learning also produces healing, as from physical violence, whether it be like the experiences people have in high intensity war zones, or a more structural and systemic violence that penetrates across the world through systems of education, workplaces, or other oppressions that the 'patrix'[13] reproduces. Indeed, those breakthrough moments reward us with solid relationships, intelligent friendships, memorable moments, bursts of laughter and liberating crying, celebrations, playfulness, unexpected discoveries, and a sense that deeper connections are restored. You become part of what the artist Emilio Fantin started to call an 'invisible community.' For this to happen, we need to

allow the possibility of an empty space. Emptiness is often felt like a vacuum and it may generate insecurity and anxiety. In Buddhism it is a pregnant void, a space dense with unexpressed possibilities.

Learning should be conceived as a holistic process, organically part of life, where everything that happens—even chaos itself is part of the production of new knowledge, and where the material, the spiritual, and the intellectual parts of ourselves are activated. It should also include the knowledge and the wisdom of the body: we have channels for the energy to circulate, for us becoming vessels, learning also with our senses, instincts, emotions, in and from nature.

Living together, literally, could be a pedagogical tool as it helps to develop empathy and social cohesion and accelerates the possibility to learn from each other, sharing spaces and time: a lot of time, all the time, with no 'in betweens,'[14] simply waking up, doing things, cooking, debating all night long, dancing, singing, visiting people, exploring, conducting 'convivial investigations,' creating, dismantling, reassembling... It produces a state of intimacy, a poetic way to be, which seems to have a (nano)political as well as aesthetic quality. Our bodies, initially separated, start to move together, a common pace slowly emerges, a rhythm generated by one single breath.[15] Reading a book with ten, twenty people can be transformative: you not only read it with them but through their voices, their (mother) tongues, their questions and interpretations, in a constant translation, a translation of the translation, from one language to the other, but also from one understanding to another. When you write a text with a group, negotiating every word, expanding the meaning, arguing, more nuances and subtleties emerge together with a sense of collective identification. Your voice starts to contain a multitude.

The pedagogical process becomes one of germination, a confluence of knowledges, in a context of dialectics and reciprocity. An ethos of care and compassion propagates, tensions unfold and may stay unresolved: we learn in that tension, maybe not to judge, but to expose and share, to discuss without being prompted to react or provide a solution, 'not either or, but both and more.'[16]

In this process you may feel lost, but then a direction emerges as you sense the foundation of a new constituency, something that stays with you even when you seem to be isolated or burnt out, or when you experience some failure. Mistakes, errors, false starts, controversies, are all very valuable learning allies, as they are occasions for revising our frameworks, fostering critical dialogues, stirring a desire for authenticity. And they provide a sense that together we are learning something new by being, doing, and living with all our contradictions. We need to exercise our agen¬cies more, to refine our tools and languages, to choose better technologies. We should resist feeling overwhelmed by the task, as we are in a phase of pre-paration, a process of transformation (revolution?) that takes place in time, a time in which every moment has a value.

To be fragile but still open and trustworthy, full of hope into the collective process, is to be in a state of 'vulnerable confidence.'[17] And it is exactly in this process with the other that a radical tenderness can appear, that commitment and support develop, friendships blossom, alliances form, people fall in love, heal, build, and weave their paths together. It is in those intimate contexts that a revolutionary, radical love made of a

thirst for justice, militant gentleness, and subversive soulfulness can form. There we discover a way to fight the atomized, isolated, egocentric individual that we risk to become in times of spiritual starvation and political catastrophe, as **Cornel West** argues in his beautiful *Black Prophetic Fire*, a true love letter to the next generation.[18]

Our words, once fragmented, begin to collide, and a common horizon appears—one that always finishes and never finishes, and we live together, with no separation.
If teaching is a process of transcending[19] oneself into the other, then learning is becoming something more (or less).

Free Home University (FHU)

is an open–ended, research-based, artist-led experiment in alternative and radical education, a pedagogical and artistic platform, started in Italy in 2013. The name suggests a desire for a non-vertical, energy-liberating, insurgent environment, in continuity with the legacy of critical and emancipatory pedagogies (Free), within a protected and intimate space (Home), committed to support an autonomous community of learners (University).
An intensive collective experience, through a coalitional and self-directed approach, the lines of inquiry and methods of study vary following the praxis of the participants, and respond to the local –global issues, along communities in struggle, as organic farmers/ land protectors; the LGBTQQI organizations, informal groups of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; social and cultural workers engaged in social change and eco-justice.

10 Points On What We Learned[20]

Alessandra Pomarico

(1)

Re-imagining is necessary, and when
done collectively it is lovable.
To re-imagine we need
a new language,
the old one is not enough and
is maybe the reason why we cannot
yet re-imagine.
Our imagination is
in a moment of crisis,
or maybe just in between.

Question:

Can we imagine a place for
letting the unexpected emerge in the
cracks of the definite and the defined?

(2)

A different time is necessary.
We need to build our own
temporality, abandon the projection
into the future and the insistence of a
constant present.
There are three generations before,
three generations ahead, and then us
in the middle.

Question:

How can we become a meantime?

A different way of listening is needed. Practicing profound contemplation, silencing our hyperactive egos and letting go of control and work. By always doing something, we only accelerate and reproduce what already exists.

Question:

How can we allow ourselves to be bored, rest, or wonder?

Making circles is generative. Concentric circles, large circles, small circles and spirals. Making circles to discuss, meet, play, to dance and sing, to tell stories, to look at each other, to question, to find consentment. Making circles like the Zapatistas make assembleas, with the practical aim to solve a problem, and the practical result to create a community.

Question:

How to be many?

Having the children present.
Letting them be and participate, and learning from them.
Allowing the little older to take care of the little younger.
Allowing mothers and fathers, but especially mothers, to participate and not be isolated and fragmented.
It helps all of us to share responsibility, circulating the gift of children and growing up together.

Question:

How can we be those children?[21]

In the same way
we need the presence and the wisdom of the elders.
To grow older is needed.

Question:

How can we oppose a society that doesn't allow us to grow older?

As my dear friend would say, we should always include dogs: dogs break our seriousness and always invite cuddles, playing, sweet names in our mother tongues, and running after a stick or a ball. Dogs are representatives for other species. To spend time with and cuddle a plant, or a rock, is an option too.

Question:

How can we fall in love again?

By extension, let us try not to forget all those wonderful and not domesticated fish, wild horses, the family of beavers, and yes even the mice and the snails, soil-seeds-stones-sand-straw-skies-snow-sound streams.

We are part of a larger system.

Care, not exploit.

Ecoversities as solidarity.

Question:

How can we bring life back?

Practice intuition, patience,
self-reflection, radical tenderness,
collectivity, build spaces of intimacy.
Practicing, what?
decolonizing
positioning
commoning, how?
intersectionally!
practice slow and deep,
skinny dipping laughing hard,
singing loud,
take the risk,
cook for the whole village.
Practice to leave, and come back,
to get lost,
practice to a be a couple in a group,
and a group in a couple
practice not knowing,
practice to walk with the dead,
practice to live and to die,
practice practice practice!

Question:
How we want to learn?

Question:
How do we want to live?

Footnotes

[1]
In particular, Free Home University, an artistic and pedagogical ex¬periment I co--initiated with a group of artists in 2013, focused on sharing the learning by living together; and Ecoversities, an international network that aims to rethink more just and ecological forms of learning.

[2]
The term is mostly associated with Hakim Bey, T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism (New York: Autonomedia, 1991).

[3]
John Searle explains how 'status function declarations' create and maintain realities; cases of linguistic shifts have been significant to enhance change: the man setting himself on fire, which ignited the Arab Spring, or what happened during the collapse of the Soviet Union, the struggle for abolitionism or women's rights. When systems are undermined, a shift in the 'institutional status function' is necessary in order for our institutions to be collectively re-¬legitimized. John Searle, Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

[4]
The Greek and Latin etymology of the word 'pedagogue' refers to the slave who escorted boys to school, in a relationship based on differences of power and status. The 'educator' represents 'a foster father' (caring with authority) and the 'erudite' is the one who 'polishes the unskilled, the rude, the rough.' 'Education' comes from educere, as in 'bringing out, to draw out, extract, branch out.' 'To inform' (as in neo-¬Latin languages forming is used as an equivalent of educating) means 'to give a shape' or 'having power to form or animate' (whereby somebody presumably is without anima if not instructed); it shares a similar root with 'to conform' (to form according to the same rules). 'Docile' originally meant 'the one who is easily taught' (by a doctor who in Latin was the one who taught, as in 'indoctrinate' or in Doctorate, the highest point of scholarly education). 'To teach' in Neo Latin languages means to put 'a sign on.'

[5]
In Governing by Debt, Maurizio Lazzarato points out that in 2012 students in the US had borrowed and still owed $904 billion, a number equal to over half of the public debt of Italy and France. He explains how the cultural hegemony of neoliberal universities is organized, and situates the new class struggle as a struggle between creditors and debtors. The access to credit as a way to access debt, and debt as a new technique of power, 'the technique most adequate to the production of neoliberalism's homo economicus.' Maurizio Lazzarato, Governing by Debt(Cambridge, MA: Semiotext(E); MIT Press, 2015).

[6]
Edgardo García, in his Learning to Learn in a Context of War: Notes on the 1st Ecoversities Gathering, translated by Gerardo Lopez Amaro.

[7]
The End of the World as We Know It, title of the dark and poetical song by R.E.M.

[8]
Jacques Rancière, The Emancipated Spectator (London: Verso, 2009).

[9]
More on the concepts of convivial research, insurgent learning, ecology of knowledge, epistemological diversity, and convergent spaces for temporary zones of autonomous knowledge production in Manuel Callagan, 'In Defense of Conviviality and the Collective Subject', Polis 33 (2012), https://polis.revues.org/8432 (accessed April 19, 2016).

[10] Rancière, op. cit. (note 10).

[11]
As in Gustavo Esteva, 'Commoning in the New Society', Community Development Journal 49 (January 2014) suppl. 1, i144¬i159.

[12]
This notion appears in Lisa M. Landreman (ed.), The Art of Effective Facilitation (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2013), with many reflections on the common practice of setting ground rules, especially when working around issues of social justice.

[13]
The expression, from Andrew Langford at Gaia University, is used to describe a weaving matrix of violence that includes patriarchy and colonialism. This relates to the necessity of healing in order not to be the oppressed or oppressors in our ways of relating and of knowing. This is something we all need to take care of—in taking care of each other.

[14]
The expression is from Rene Gabri, an artist from whom I learned the importance of deconstructing our habits and the beauty of abandon¬ing our-selves to dérives, conviviality, and a situationist, unorthodox approach in order for a new imaginary to emerge.

[15]
In The Use of Bodies, philosopher Giorgio Agamben refers to the concept of 'use' (as ontologically opposite to the concept of 'action') where bodies are no longer subjects, but forms of life. Giorgio Agamben, The Use of Bodies (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2016).

[16]
An expression of Vanessa de Oliviera Andreotti, who challenges binary thinking with the task to bridge Western and indigenous systems of knowledge.

[17]
Udi Mandel in conversation with Kelly Teamey, after the 2015 Ecoversities gathering in Tamera, Portugal. A synthesis of the experience, through theirs and many other voices, can be found online here: https://www.opendemocracy.net/transformation/kelly-teamey¬udi¬mandel/are¬eco¬versities¬future¬for¬higher¬education (accessed April 19, 2016).

[18]
The notion of radical love resonates with Derrida's notion of 'politics of friendship' and Spivak's 'ethics of friendship,' and the need for a praxis built around solidarity. In Black Prophetic Fire, West, in the theological of liberation's tradition, reclaims this notion along with those of truth, justice, freedom, sacrifice, death as a reaction to systems of oppression, including capitalism. Cornell West, Black Prophetic Fire(Boston: Beacon Press, Boston, 2014).

[19]
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari bring forth this notion in Mille Plateaux (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1980).

[20]
This exercise in the form of a poem was written as a response to the question, 'What did we learn during the Ecoversities meeting in Tamera?' Contents refer to that particular experience and to some tools and words that emerged by being together. In particular, learning with/ from the Earth, through different knowledge systems, positioning ourselves including conflict. A strong learning was also the necessity to abandon established instruments of facilitation, preferring to start from personal narratives.

[21]
An expression borrowed from the artist Ayreen Anastas in the context of Free Home University.



figue verte



ficus carica L.

Food as Pedagogy

Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri

Food

_as energy shi in Chinese traditional medicine is the vital force in all beings, including aspects of matter and energy both convertible into one another. Good quality shi in food is transferred to the animal or human that eats it and is manifested in lack of obstruction in the life shi and the internal organs shi of that animal or human. Food is one of three sources of shi in the human body, the other two being the air one breaths and the essence of one's kidneys. Shi is also transferred between people and food, the cook transfers their shi to the food, the farmer transfers their shi to the plants, and so on and so forth.

_as healing once shi stagnates and is prevented from moving, sickness of all kinds and pain may occur. Thus, improving quantity and quality of shi is crucial for healing to take place. In Chinese medicine important dimensions of any condition resulting from an imbalance of the shi can be described according to the Six Divisions of the yin and yang. First: the depth of a condition (interior/ exterior), second: its thermal nature (heat/cold), third: its strength (deficient/ excess). The most important food qualities according to Chinese medicine are (heat/cold). Many factors play in influencing (heat/cold) properties of food, the most important is the effect of cooking. Since historically the evolution of food selection and elaboration coincides so closely with medicinal and curative uses, each culinary tradition retains specific knowledge of health and healing.

_as production food understood as in the capitalist mode of production, is food that has gone from the world of sustenance and abundance to a world of commodities and scarcity. It also implies the increasing processes of enclosure which take the inherent reproducibility of the fruits of the earth into ever rarefied and artificialized realms. The aim of constructing these realms is not, as it is often purported, to increase abundance and availability - as in the case of pesticides, artificial fertilizers, or genetic modification - but instead to foreclose the possibility of communities to reproduce themselves outside the circuits of capitalist production. Furthermore, social production of existence in relation to the material production of food become separated and seemingly unrelated spheres.

_as reproduction the social production of existence is intrinsically related to the cultivation of land and the production of food not _as commodity but as a basic element of common life. The relations to life (plant, animal, soil) are not relations of domination, mastery, and exploitation but instead relations of intimacy, care, becoming-with. Humans are not at the center of this process but can play a critical part in restoring or assisting the Earth's own capacities to heal. See also permaculture, Fukuoka's natural farming and biodynamic cultivation as examples.

_for subsistence from a feminist perspective, a subsistence economy based on rural and non- industrialized world experience of self-sufficiency has to defy even the Marxist perspective focused on production and on desiring what the ruling classes have, that is also their notion of wealth and prosperity. Instead subsistence focuses and insists on 1. a view from below, from the village perspective of 'third world countries'. 2. maintaining one's means of subsistence; whatever that involves according to a specific form-of-life, whether it is a cow, some chickens, some land, common lands for pasture, foraging, reforesting and re-wilding etc . 3. the awareness of the importance of such perspective. 4. the reversal of the hegemonic view 'what is good for the industrial world is good for the rest' into 'what is good for the village (the subsistence perspective) will be good for the world.'

_as poison strawberries, spinach, nectarines, apples, peaches, pears, grapes, cherries, celery, tomatoes, sweet bell peppers, potatoes, are described on some websites as the dirty dozen since they are laden with pesticides, up to 20 different ones in case of strawberries. The clean dozen on the other hand, is supposed to be the list of fruits and vegetables that contains less pesticides!

_as consumption however, these lists are very limited in their perspective and consider food as commodity or just another consumer choice - healthy/unhealthy, expensive/ cheap - and not food as it pertains to the ecology at large, including ground water levels, wild life, plant life, insect life, soil vitality, seas, oceans, rivers, sea life, as well as the health and socio-economic conditions of those who cultivate and care for the land.

_in feminism jamming or the theoretical machine of production of truth and meaning and making raspberry Jam are connected and thus related to female writing or écriture féminine. The machine can be imagined as a large apparatus having several parts each with a definite function stuck with words, verses, lines, quotations, extracts, excerpts, theories, manifestos, knowledges, texts and writings leaking with pink red raspberry ink jam flowing. No way to contain it.

_as garbage it is common in highly industrialized societies especially in cities to throw excessive amounts of food that either expire, or do not make it to be sold within a defined time frame. This isthe daily practice of supermarkets of throwing breads, baked goods, fruits, vegetables, sandwiches, prepared foods, etc.. It is also common to ship and package foods with materials that increase the amounts of garbage such as plastic and paper everywhere. Some gleaners practice what is called dumpster diving, to rescue some of the food wasted by such actions. Some supermarkets in some cities practice throwing bleach into the garbage bags in order to deter anyone from gleaning and using it.

_as compost in many parts of the world, large amounts of vegetable scraps and food are mixed with undifferentiated garbage instead of being composted to create regenerative soil. The resulting hummus from compost can be used to create nutrient rich soil, which helps plants and trees survive dry seasons and resist diseases.

_as protest it is also common to refuse food as a political protest in hunger strikes. On November 9th 1974 Holger Meins, a revolutionary member of the Red Army Faction, died of starvation during a hunger strike in Wittich prison. Force-feeding on the other hand is a strategy of the state and the prison industrial complex to violently break the fast of the protesters and in some cases to kill them without acknowledging or changing the conditions the hunger strikes attempt to resist. More recent examples are the multiple hunger strikes of detainees in Guantanamo Bay as well as Palestinians in Israeli detention centers.

_and capitalism overeating, bulimia, anorexia, panic, anxiety and depression are but a few of the epidemics resulting from information overload and intensification of nervous stimuli and from the retreat of libidinal investment. Not to underestimate the contribution of toxins in food and environment in causing such epidemics. Some speak of capitalism as the "silent ingredient in our food" and affirm that to resist, rebel or revolt today one needs to begin by understanding and targeting the industrialized capitalist food system.

_and desire if human life under capitalism has been channeled in order to keep the established order of things in place, then desire is one of its major means to do so. Channeling and regulating desire for certain foods not others, creating diets, nutrition science, regiments, obsessions isolated from real social and political relations to food and environment is one example of this colonized desire.

_as ideology "where will we find enough food for 9 billions?" and "Can we really feed the world?" are but rhetorical questions to arrive at readymade and predictable answers such as recommending intensive industrial chemical farming and genetically modified seeds and establishing microcredits in rural areas of "developing countries" that ultimately lead to the destruction of the social fabric and world bank land grab programs, and so on. Furthermore, arguments that may acknowledge the importance of ecological problems we are facing, within a capitalist ideology, would still come up with "solutions" based on isolating and separating the questions and issues at stake and channeling them towards profit making, one such example is carbon emission trading. 'Within life (nature) there is a solution for every problem. In Capitalism there is a problem in every solution.'

_and class the corporate cooptation of organic and fair trade standards -through certain modes of certification- and the growing interest of these corporations in organic and fair trade foods as labels and means for generating a new 'high-end markets', deter some altogether from organic food, thinking that it is either not authentically organic, or mainly connected to wealthy people who can afford it, and come to the conclusion that for equality's sake one has to eat as the 'working class' does, namely, industrially produced foods. But food justice movements around the world debunk the falsity of this argument. Capitalist chemical food production, often hidden under the misnomer of 'conventional farming' is from its production to its distribution based on exploitation and destruction - whether at the level of the land, water, and soil or at the level of all the life forms who sustain or depend on it (above all the 'working class' who is today increasingly without work).

_ justice Via Campesina is a peasant movement that was founded in 1993. It spans from Africa to South America and beyond. The movement stands for 1. Agro-ecology and peasant seeds. 2. Climate and environmental justice. 3. Dignity for migrants and waged workers. 4. Food sovereignty. 5. International solidarity. 6. The right to land, water and territories. 7. Peasant's rights.

And against 1. **Patriarchy**. 2. **Capitalism** and **free trade**. 3. **Transnational companies and agribusiness.**

_and colonialism England, France, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Portugal were pioneers in exploiting slave labor in plantations they created for sugar, cocoa, and coffee in many colonized islands and places ranging from Africa to the Caribbean to South America, as well as South and East Asia. The wide imposition of refined sugar products for example through marketing campaigns often targeting children continues to plague the world, in causing obesity, diabetes, depression and other health problems.

_as development the dispositif of development is what continues the colonial capitalist project today under new terms which hide the colonials' continued racism and disregard (or expropriation) of local knowledges (or ways of reproducing life and the environment.) Fast food, pre-packaged food, chain stores with slavery as minimum wage labor, microwave ovens with everyday exposure to radiation, readymade foods as nutrition and supplements for all kinds of vitamins and minerals deprived from their real food and earth sources, are the faces of development in this realm.

_and modernity it has been noted by some autonomous thinkers how both in the capitalist and socialist worlds, no figure has been more brutally attacked and no form-of-life as violently eradicated in the 20th century than the peasant. This figure, who for thousands of years had developed countless methods of subsisting and caring for the land, had to be supplanted by the modern factory worker, posited in the Marxist tradition, as the subject of history.

Whereas the peasant, was seen as either a relic of previous stages of human development, backward, traditional, or worse, identified with the bourgeoisie; the factory worker as proletariat was the harbinger of a future of human mastery of the earth, automization, collectivization, efficiency, and industry. Today, as that line of futurity and so-called progress seems to have broken completely, neither the worker nor the peasant, as we knew them, exist in the capitalist hyper-industrialized world. And what we are left with are the not-yet-integrated-into-the- capitalist-world-order peasants and the attack on their livelihoods by the same exhausted discourses of development.

_as commons if commons can be understood as the means of reproduction of life, that is the life of all living things - then food is at the heart of reclaiming it. First, to understand that humans are just one part of a large ecology of animals and plants and insects and microscopic life forms that have different food needs. The more toxic, the more depleted of diversity and vitality that common ecology is, the poorer the availability of food and of the life forms.*****

What does one require to reproduce life and what is to live well, to have enough? And what does it mean wealth and poverty? Isn't it "wealth" the ability to reproduce life, a good life, without being dependent on money? To reclaim our means of reproduction is to reclaim non-commodified clean air, water, and land as non-negotiable domains for the benefit of all life. Standing opposed to this reclamation, is the intensification of human 'mastery' over the earth, and ever greater processes of enclosure, privatization, and destruction of commons in the last five hundred years which has lead to the elimination of the majority of life forms which previously populated it.******

How will we nourish and reclaim a form-of-life that is antagonistic to such processes of destruction and dis/valuation if we do not make those necessary connections over the way that nourishment arrives and the multiplicity of beings that require it? And the complex chain of systems of inter-relations and inter-dependencies that reproduce it daily. Whether it is the production of food or its elaboration - from the 'great farmer' to the 'great cook' - without a commons that is defended from privatization, extraction and further deterioration (_as seeds, _as clean air, _as clean rivers, _as seas, _as non-toxic land, _as recipes, ...) we will be reduced to passive consumers driven further and further away from our means of everyday reproduction and autonomy.*******

***** This deterioration of nourishment can be understood from a material and immaterial perspective. For human life, in English it is common to speak of 'food that can nourish the soul.' And in this way, food can also be music or art or writing. The arts are also a form of nourishment: they are also part of the vast wealth of the commons that we inherit from past generations.

****** Some have erroneously referred to this disfigurement of the planet as the anthropocene, forgetting that it is not all cultures or the human, as such, but a specific modern, mostly capitalist colonialist hyper-extractivist and hyper-consumptive human social- economic form, which has been responsible for reshaping physically the surface and climate of the planet.

*** Ironically, after the nuclear disaster of Fukushima - which continues to effect food eaten inside and exported from Japan to this day - some activists suggested to short term visitors, especially those who were not familiar with Japan and could not easily discern the food from safer regions, that they could be safer eating _ junk food at an unmentionable multi-national hamburger chain, because surely the food there was less likely to be local and thus polluted. This is the dystopic future of capitalist food, since the only thing left common under capitalism is all that is irremediable, all that is dead or on its way to being dead, toxic land, toxic water, toxic food, toxic assets. If a common/s is not reclaimed through our autonomy from the capitalist reproduction of life, which includes the autonomy of our sources of food from such chains of production/destruction, then tomorrow, we can expect that the surest and safest source of food will be a small pill de-toxified through a patented process by a multi-national and purchased only by the wealthiest.

_omnia sunt communia there are no commons and no sense of a common without the practices that incarnate it, think it, use it, put us in contact with it and open up the chance for it to come, to happen, to take place. Since life itself posited under capitalism today, is a life of expropriation and deprivation of all that is common, then commoning encompasses the multiplicity of practices which open up the potential for a free and common use of those things which have been privatized. And where is that privatization most apparent if not in the life itself and the relation of property and propriety, which we exercise over ourselves and our time. Since under capitalism, the only thing sacred is private property, then commoning will always have a dimension of profanation. Commoning as returning to a free and common use of something that had been separated from the common thus begins with the de-privatization of life and the time or duration that is its objective material. A common use of the world, a common use of ourselves, and our bodies. This use which is a contact that is always opening the in- determinedness of whatever is called a self, our capacity to affect and be affected. Thus, affirming not the sharing of this or that thing, this or that resource as separate entities, but as affirmation of the intimate co-existence and inter-dependence of being and becoming, of being-in-common, of living-in-common. Placing ourselves in that experience of our co-exposure to and dependence on all that is common. And not just as a process of opening to a common that would be grounded on a specific territory or materiality but more importantly to a co-belonging without any ground other than the co-belonging itself.

The practices which open to that common as pure event of _being-with and _becoming-with _and happiness

no one likes to eat alone, yet alone cook or clean! No one likes to plant alone, yet alone water or weed! No one likes to harvest alone, yet alone wash and glean! No one likes to have wine alone, yet alone coffee or tea! No one likes to fight capitalism alone, yet alone write or think! Really? Not really? Then wherein lies happiness for you? And how do we you they want to think eat become live together?

_ as_work_habitation_food_manifesto

WHEN WE WANTED OTHERWISE AND FOOD COULD NO LONGER BE OTHERWISE

'It's a strange heading,' one could say. *'What have all these to do with food?' 'How did they get there?'*
Food, Work, Habitation - these are the pillars of the modern enterprise of humans ...

Sure one could add health but these are anyway redundant ———
——> since work, food, how and where one lives, the house, the habits and conditions of a place largely determine health.
And regarding education, the entire system of education in the capitalist modernist socialist colonialist imperialist world is oriented toward preparing students for *'work'*.

CREATE CHEAP FOOD they called it the 'green revolution' & in the name of saving people from hunger once more ... the development paradigm!!!

or ideology of the colonial western European American British - even Soviet, in its own way-took on Modernist cosmology of a *'nature'* external to humans and through science placed in the service and hands of *'man', 'man above all'* ...above women ...above indigenous peoples, above the *'primitive', 'backward'* and colonized *'races'* who were also treated as products of *'nature'* to be put in the service of logos, language, reason, rationality, of this same *'man'* who was always more enlightened, more knowledgeable ...who possessed, who owned, who read, who wrote, who could sign his name, and recreate the world in his own image and imagination.

|
|
And that same cosmology was employed in many parts of the world, using intensive processes, phosphates for fertilizer and chemical poisons to severely compromise the earth's biodiversity. In countries like the Philippines and India where it was employed, they often relied on western educated locals working on consort with western transnational corporations
\ \
resulting in a kind of double-domestication - if the agrarian agricultural revolution in the Near East in places like Mesopotamia was the first that created new habits of domestication and sedentarism, as opposed to periodic migration, nomadism and higher consumption of wild types of grains, plants, vegetables, and fruits.
|
|
the birth of patriarchy and the birth of hoarding and property!?
CREATE WORK —> Job —> Profession / RE—> Vocation \ VOCATION

Revocation - as refusal of the paradigm of domestication, education, work, production, leading to destruction. And as the affirmation of a search for a form-of-life which cannot be separated from itself. PROVISION FOR HOMES AND HOUSING. Housing as small cell like prisons - commodified, isolated and 'protected' from the 'elements', 'immune', 'invulnerable', outside of nature, 'master of nature.'

the birth of the 'security' paradigm ! ?... all this to create "productive" humans for infinite consumption in a finite world.
If what they call DEVELOPMENT = DESTRUCTION = CONTINUED PROCESSES of DISPOSSESSION, ENCLOSURE, PRIVATIZATION and DEVASTATION = RACISM & SEXISM then, there have to be other ways.

The spaces that have been appropriated by 'humans' (namely, patriarchal-colonial-capitalist), have been hostile to other life forms to such a degree that birds, insects, plants, trees ...all become foreign invaders, pests, weeds ... and we need theories and extreme levels of alienated abstraction to think or ponder these 'appropriations' and still there is no place to act out toward, with these ideas and intuitions ... as more and more a common world (with all of its creatures and surroundings) is devastated, commodified and robbed of its contours, characters, singularities, specificities.

How to name this movement of the common/s with which we orient ourselves?

Especially when it refuses the < < < < < 'backward' and 'forward' or 'progress' > > > > > of the 'modernizing front' ! ? ? ?
CENTERING OURSELVES AGAIN IN A MODE ^ FORM ^ MANNER ^ WAY ...

((((un
understanding undoing
unrhythms unways of living
unmodes of inhabiting un perceptions
un learning))))))

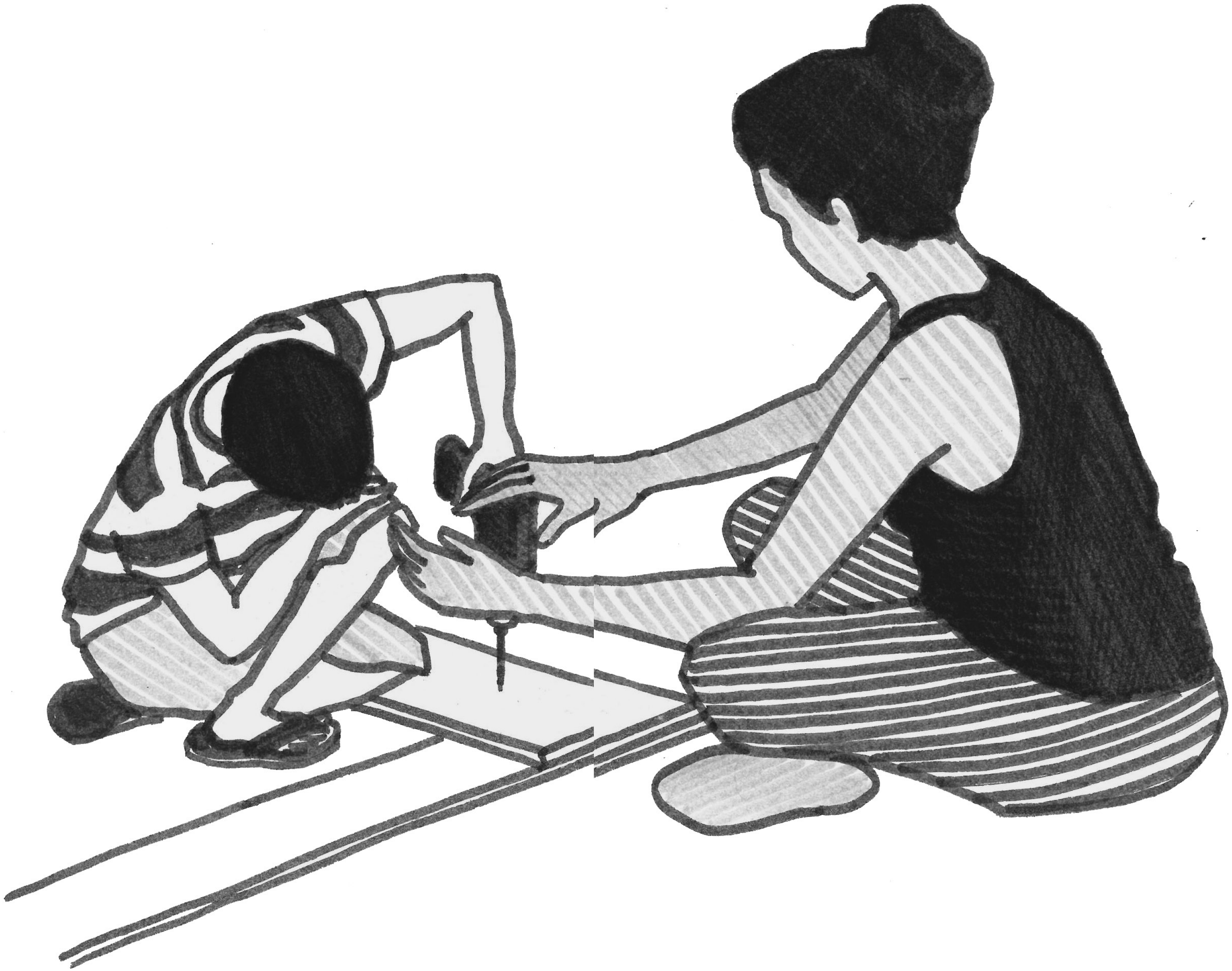
that
WHAT WE NOURISH OURSELVES WITH
&
the way we arrive to it & how ! ! ! it is made, cultivated, harvested
IS WHAT WE ARE

Ayreen Anastas:

At the beginning there was air. A biography without a name. And then there was walking, on a bridge arbitrarily constructed, a bridge spanning between two banks of void. A passageway, a bridgeway and two empty envelopes. And then there was crossing, on the bridge of language: a waymaking. Going from here to there, from there to here. What is given to the world and what is received from it. How did I get lost? How did we get lost? A biography is the rushing from one side to the other side of the void - a busy-ness she refuses to adhere-to, to obey, to achieve or to accomplish.

Rene Gabri:

This short note is written on Thursday September 26 initiated exactly at 3am at the 66th street stop, while on the Bronx Bound 1 Train. It is the kind of day that crows don't crow anymore. It's the kind of day that the scandal is no longer scandalous. A pan shot widens to show a landscape without landscape, a waterfall without water, a cowboy, a buffalo, a mortuary, a noose, a jury hung. A day without justice and without breath. A day which exceeds itself in delivering the night. A day not unlike itself, a day like any other. It is a judgment day without judgment. It is a hell without the heaven. It is a day of reckoning with nothing. And thus the fullest day. A day full of biographies whose lives escape them. 3:21, 157th street.



Really Useful Knowledge

WHW (What, How & for Whom)

The following text originally appeared in the catalogue published on the occasion of the exhibition Really Useful Knowledge, curated by What, How & for Whom/WHW and organized and produced by the Museo Nacional Centro De Arte Contemporanea Reina Sofía.

The notion of "really useful knowledge" originated with workers' awareness of the need for self-education in the early nineteenth century. In the 1820s and 1830s, workers' organizations in the United Kingdom introduced this phrase to describe a body of knowledge that encompassed various "unpractical" disciplines such as politics, economics, and philosophy, as opposed to the "useful knowledge" proclaimed as such by business owners, who some time earlier had begun investing in the advancement of their businesses by funding the education of workers in "applicable" skills and disciplines such as engineering, physics, chemistry, or math. Whereas the concept of "useful knowledge" operates as a tool of social reproduction and a guardian of the status quo, "really useful knowledge" demands changes by unveiling the causes of exploitation and tracing its origins within the ruling ideology; it is a collective emancipatory, theoretical, emotional, informative, and practical quest that starts with acknowledging what we do not yet know.

Although its title looks back to the class struggles of capitalism's early years, the present exhibition is an inquiry into "really useful knowledge" from a contemporary perspective, positing critical pedagogy and materialist education as crucial elements of collective struggle. The exhibition is set against the backdrop of an ongoing crisis of capitalism and the revolts and attempts to oppose it at the structural level. In examining ways in which pedagogy can act as an integral part of progressive political practices, *Really Useful Knowledge* looks into the desires, impulses, and dilemmas of historical and current resistance and the ways they are embodied in education as a profound process of self-realization. The exhibition considers relations between usefulness and uselessness, knowledge and nescience, not as binary oppositions but as dialectical and, first and foremost, as dependable on the class perspective.

Conceived at the invitation of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, the exhibition was shaped in a dialogue with the museum's curatorial and educational team and is inevitably influenced by the discussions and experiences of the local context. The devastating effects of austerity measures in Spain have been confronted by numerous collective actions in which the forms of protest and organized actions fighting to reclaim hard-won rights have gradually transformed into formal or informal political forces based on principles of the commons and the democratization of power. Through these processes issues pertaining to the wide field of education became a prominent part of the social dynamic—from initiatives for empowerment through self-education, to the reconfigured locus of the university and the role of students in the current social battles, to the struggles to defend public education.

It is not by accident that *Really Useful Knowledge* includes numerous collective artistic positions. Although disclaimers about collective work have been issued on many occasions—beyond the lures of productiveness and mutual interest, working together is not a guarantee for change, positive or negative—it is a prerequisite for social transformation. In recent years a number of collectives have again come to the forefront of social change by building new systems for renegotiating and redistributing power relations in all spheres of life. Several of the collectives that take part in the exhibition explore its potential as a site for colearning and a tool for reaching out. The group Subtramas has included organizations and activists from all over Spain in a project developed in dialogue with the exhibition. Social actors such as self-education groups, occupied spaces, independent publishers, collective libraries, activists groups, social centers, theorists, poets, LGBT activists, and feminists will take part in assemblies, readings, discussions, and various public actions.

The activist and feminist collective **Mujeres Públicas** engages with various issues connected to the position of woman in society. One of their permanent causes is the political struggles around abortion legislation in Latin America. The group's project for the exhibition gathers the recent material from their actions and protests in public space.

Chto Delat initiate interventions examining the role of art, poetics, and literature in educational situations and integrate activism into efforts to make education more politically based. Their work *Study, Study and Act Again* (2011–) functions as an archival, theatrical, and didactic space, created to establish interaction with visitors to the exhibition. Many of the publications included in the **Chto Delat** installation are published by the Madrid based activist collective and independent publishing house **Traficantes de Sueños**, who have also organized the continuous education project *Nociones Comunes* (Common Notions) on a number of topical questions, including the status of labor; geopolitics; and connecting grass-roots activists, militant researchers, citizens, and students with theorists and economists. The work by Argentinean artistic duo **Iconoclasistas** (**Pablo Ares** and **Julia Risler**) uses critical mapping to produce resources for the free circulation of knowledge and information. Their maps, built through collective research and workshops, summarize the effects of various social dynamics, such as the colonization of South America, the history of uprisings on the continent, and the urban developments brought about by neoliberal politics.

> *Works can only enter into real contact as inseparable elements of social intercourse. It is not works that come into contact, but people, who, however, come into contact through the medium of works.*
> **— M. Bakhtin** and **P. M. Medvedev,** The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship**[1]**

Really Useful Knowledge explores the possibility of art initiating encounters and debate between people, works, structures, tools, objects, images, and ideas, embarking from two crucial notions—materialist pedagogy arising from the Marxist interpretations of **Walter Benjamin**'s cultural and political analysis; and critical pedagogy. The exhibition looks at diverse procedural, nonacademic, antihierarchical, grass-roots, heterodox educational situations primarily occupied with the transformative potentials of art, testing the role of images in that process. Without attempting to provide an "overview" of the various educational projects and practices of recent years, many

[1]
Cited in Raymond Williams, "The Uses of Cultural Theory," New Left Review 158 (July–August 1986).

of which use the rhetoric of education as a displaced politics and whose most visible outcome has been an inflation of the discursive realm and *"pedagogical aesthetic,"* **[2]** the exhibition looks into the educational process as an existing and integral (but not to be taken for granted) part of the exhibition genre and the original role of the museum.

By considering teaching and learning as reciprocal active processes, **Victoria Lomasko** has developed *Drawing Lesson* (2010–), a project in which, as a volunteer for the Center for Prison Reform, she has been giving drawing lessons to the inmates of juvenile prisons in Russia. Lomasko developed her own methodology of empowering the socially oppressed by employing images to strengthen analytical thinking and empathy. Working closely with organizations for the rights of immigrants, **Daniela Ortiz** developed *Nation State II* (2014), a project engaged with the issue of immigration, specifically with the integration tests required for obtaining residency permits. Revealing this test as a mechanism for the further exclusion and extension of colonial dominance over illegal workers coming mostly from ex-colonies, *Nation State II* collaborates with immigrants in creating the tools needed to learn the critical information they require when obtaining their rights. At the same time, the project develops a critical analysis of immigration legislature in Spain.

Really Useful Knowledge develops through a number of recurring themes revolving around the relationship between the artist and social change, the dialectic embedded in the images and visual realm that can generate political action, and the tension between perceived need for active involvement and insistence on the right of art to be "useless." In **Cecilia Vicuña**'s *What Is Poetry to You?*—filmed in 1980 in Bogotá—the artist asks passers-by to respond to the question posed in the work's title. The answers offer personal definitions of poetry that are opposed to racial, class, and national divisions; and the collective voice emerges that delineates a direction for emancipation and articulates socialist ideas through art. While relying on research into military technology and operations as in many of his works, in *Prototype for a Non-functional Satellite* (2013) **Trevor Paglen** creates a satellite that functions as a sculptural element in the gallery space, its very "uselessness" serving to advocate for a technology divorced from corporate and military interests. Similarly, the *Autonomy Cube* (2014) that Paglen developed in collaboration with computer researcher and hacker Jacob Appelbaum problematizes the tension between art's utilitarian and aesthetic impulses. While visually referencing **Hans Haacke**'s seminal work of conceptual art, *Condensation Cube* (1963–1965), the *Autonomy Cube* offers free, open-access, encrypted, Internet hotspot that route traffic over the TOR network, which enables private, unsurveilled communication.

Carole Condé and **Karl Beveridge's** series of photographs *Art Is Political* (1975) employs stage photography to relate social movements with a field of art. The series combines dancers' bodies in movement with **Yvonne Rainer**'s choreography and Chinese agitprop iconography, with each photograph composing one letter of the sentence *Art Is Political*. The tensions and contradictions pertaining to the possibility of reconciling high art and political militancy figure also in **Carla Zaccagnini**'s *Elements of Beauty* (2014), a project that examines protest attacks on paintings in UK museums carried out by suffragettes in the early twentieth century. By outlining the knife slashes made on the paintings, Zaccagnini retraces them as abstract forms, while the accompanying

[2]
Irit Rogoff, "Turning," e-flux 0 (November 2008) at e-flux.com

audio guides provide fragmented information on the suffragettes' court trials. One hundred years after those iconoclastic attacks, Zaccagnini's work poses uncomfortable questions about where we would put our sympathies and loyalties today and how we know when we have to choose.

> *Like highways, schools, at first glance, give the impression of being equally open to all comers. They are, in fact, open only to those who consistently renew their credentials.*
> **— Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society**

How societies define and distribute knowledge indicates the means by which they are structured, what is the dominant social order, and degrees of inclusion and exclusion. Artists have often attempted to analyze the way in which the education system acts as the primary element for maintaining social order and the potential for art to develop progressive pedagogy within existing systems. *Work Studies in Schools* (1976–1977) by **Darcy Lange** documents lessons in the classrooms of three schools in Birmingham, England. The project uses the promise of video's self-reflectivity and interactivity in its early years to expose class affiliation and the ways in which education determines future status in society, touching upon a range of subjects that would soon be swept away by Thatcherite ideology. While working as a teacher of visual arts in a high school in Marrakesh, artist **Hicham Benohoud** took group photographs of his pupils in the carefully posed manner of tableaux vivants. *The Classroom* (1994–2002) creates surrealist juxtapositions of pupils' bodies, educational props, and strange objects, while students' readiness to adopt the curious and uneasy postures opens up themes of discipline, authority, and revolt. *En rachâchant* (1982), a film by **Danièle Huillet** and **Jean-Marie Straub**, humorously looks into dehierarchizing the educational process by showing schoolboy Ernesto, who insistently and with unshakable conviction refuses to go to school. *Two Solutions for One Problem* (1975) by **Abbas Kiarostami**, a short didactic film produced by the Iranian Centre for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, is a simple pedagogical tale of cooperation and solidarity that shows how two boys can resolve the conflict over a torn schoolbook through physical violence or camaraderie. In Postcards from a *Desert Island* (2011) **Adelita Husni-Bey** employs earlier pedagogical references, such as works by **Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia** or **Robert Gloton**. For the children of an experimental public elementary school in Paris, the artist organized a workshop in which the students built a society on a fictional desert island. The film shows the children's self-governance quickly encountering political doubts about decision-making processes and the role of law, echoing the impasses we experience today, but it also shows the potential and promise of self-organization.

Looking into ideological shifts that change how the relevance of particular knowledge is perceived, *marxism today (prologue)* (2010) by **Phil Collins** follows the changes brought about by the collapse of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the lives of three former teachers of Marxism-Leninism, a compulsory subject in all GDR schools that was abolished along with state socialism at the time of German reunification. The teaching of Marxism-Leninism, as described by the interviewed teachers, comes across as an epistemological method and not just a state religion whose dogmas were promulgated by a political authority. This recounting of the teachers' lives complicates the success story of German unification, which sees the absorption of this aberrant entity back into the Bundesrepublik as a simple return to nor

mality. In *use! value! exchange!* (2010), Collins reclaims the relevance of Marxist education for the present day by filming a symbolic return in which one of the former teachers gives a lesson on basic concepts of surplus value and its revolutionary potential to the clueless students of the University of Applied Sciences, previously the prestigious School of Economics, where she taught before the "transition." The students' ignorance of the most basic of the contradictions Marx discovered in capitalism—between use value and exchange value—is indicative of the present moment in which capitalism stumbles through its deepest economic crisis in eighty years. Tracing the history of public education in most cases reveals an admixture of paternalistic idealism attempting to overcome social fears that, until the nineteenth century, had discouraged the education of the poor, and a clear agenda of worker pacification through the management of social inclusion. And yet, as **Silvia Federici** and **George Caffentzis** note, *"In the same way as we would*

> *oppose the shutting down of factories where workers have struggled to control work and wages—especially if these workers were determined to fight against the closure—so we agree that we should resist the dismantling of public education, even though schools are also instruments of class rule and alienation. This is a contradiction that we cannot wish away and is present in all our struggles."* **[3]**

The regressive tendencies of neoliberalism prompted a general retreat from the ideologies of social change, steering education further toward the function of legitimizing a deeply oppressive social order. But those engaged in the contemporary "battle for education" must shed all nostalgia for the progressive strategy of welfare provision associated with the "golden age" decades of European capitalism—a strategy that fostered social mobility within the prevailing economic structure and attempted limited educational reforms governed by the humanistic faith in education as the development of "people's creative potential." They must also be cautious about betting on the emancipatory hopes that have been inscribed in the affective and communicative possibilities of immaterial labor, because in the contemporary regime touted as the knowledge society, work has become a form of internalized vocation leading to creative self-fulfillment, while innermost thoughts and creative drives have been turned into activities productive for capital. The contemporary "battle for education" has to address new social inequalities and conflicts triggered by distribution and access to knowledge and must assess the effects that knowledge as the basis of capital reproduction has on the totality of knowledge workers' existence.

> *History breaks down in images not into stories.*
> **— Walter Benjamin,** The Arcades Project

Several works in the exhibition use the principles of collecting, accumulating, and reorganizing images or objects and assembling them into sequences in order to challenge the impulses of reification and to test the ability of images to *"defin[e] our experiences more precisely in areas where words are inadequate."* **[4]** Many works constitute informal assemblies or archives aimed at revealing the ways in which images operate, thus making the very process of viewing more politically aware. Photographs by **Lidwien van de Ven** zoom into the hidden details of notorious public political events, implicating the viewer in their content. Since the 2012, the artist has been capturing the complex dynamic between the revolutionary pulses of social transformation and the counterrevolutionary resurgence in Egypt. Depicting the contested period of the Egyptian political

[3]
Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis, "Notes on the Edu-factory and Cognitive Capitalism," The Commoner, no. 12 (Spring/Summer 2007)

uprising through visual fragments, van de Ven portrays the oscillations of the very subject of the revolution.

Several works in the exhibition deal with the modernist legacy and the present-day implications and reverberations of culture having been used as a Cold War instrument. Starting from a reference to the iconic exhibition *Family of Man*, first organized at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1955 and later circulated internationally, **Ariella Azoulay**'s installation *The Body Politic—A Visual Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (2014) deconstructs the notion of human rights as a post-WWII construction based on individualism, internationalism, humanism, and modernity that at the same time also contributed to the formation of the hegemonic notion of otherness. By reworking the original display of Family of Man, Azoulay shows the cracks in its representation system and asks what kind of humanism we need today to restore the conditions for solidarity. *The visual archive of Lifshitz Institute* (1993/2013) by **Dmitry Gutov** and **David Riff** centers on rereading the works of Russian aesthetic philosopher **Mikhail Lifshitz**, one of the most controversial intellectual figures of the Soviet era. Opening in Moscow by **D. A. Pennebaker** documents impressions of the American National Exhibition organized by the U.S. government in 1959 in order to propagate the American way of life. By portraying the rendezvous of Muscovites and American advanced technology, it shows a propaganda machine gone awry: while the exhibition attempted to lure the audience with a "promised land" of consumerism, the documentary presents differences as well as similarities between American and Russian working-class life.

If the pertinence of the Cold War for the present day manifests itself through the recent revival of Cold War rhetoric that serves as a cover for military and nationalist drumbeats whose noise is making up for a suspension of democracy, the legacy of colonial rule is as vigorous today as it was in 1962, when **Jean-Paul Sartre** memorably diagnosed the situation in *"Sleepwalkers,"* (1962) an essay about the behavior of Parisians on the very day the Algerian ceasefire was signed: *"Colonialism over there, fascism here: one and the same thing."* **[5]**

Originally produced for Algerian state television, *How Much I Love You* (1985) by **Azzedine Meddour** is an ingenious mixture of the genres of educational film, propaganda, and documentary. Meddour uses excerpts from advertising and propaganda films found in colonial archives, expertly edited with a distressingly joyous soundtrack and turned on their head in an ironic chronicle of colonial rule and the French role in the Algerian War of Independence. The installation *Splinters of Monuments: A Solid Memory of the Forgotten Plains of Our Trash and Obsessions* (2014) by **Brook Andrew** includes a wide assortment of objects: artworks from the Museo Reina Sofía collections, artworks borrowed from the Museo Nacional de Antropología i Museo de América, records from local community archives, original Aboriginal human skeletons used for medical purposes, and paraphernalia such as postcards, newspapers, posters, rare books, photographs, and smaller objects. Their juxtaposition challenges hegemonic views on history, art, gender, and race. The possibility of renegotiating relations of colonialism and power through engaged acts of viewing and by bringing a hybrid social imaginary to the symbolic site of the museum is also explored by *This Thing Called the State* (2013) and *EntreMundos* [BetweenWorlds] (2013) by **Runo Lagomarsino**, works that rely on historical narratives related to the colonial conquests of Latin America and the question of migration. Looking into how society relates to its past and projects its identity, Lagomarsino borrows a collection of

[5] **Jean-Paul Sartre, "Sleepwalkers," in Colonialism and Neocolonialism (New York: Routlege, 2001), 73**

retablo votive paintings commissioned by Mexican migrants after their successful illegal crossing of the border to the United States.

> *There is not only such a thing as being popular, there is also the process of becoming popular.*
> **— Bertolt Brecht**, Against Georg Lukács

Really Useful Knowledge reiterates the necessity of producing sociability through the collective use of existing public resources, actions, and experiments, either by developing new forms of sharing or by fighting to maintain existing ones now under threat of eradication. Public Library: *Art as Infrastructure* (www.memoryoftheworld.org)(2012–) by **Marcell Mars** is a hybrid media and social project based on ideas from the open-source software movement, which creates a platform for building a free, digitized book repository. In that way, it continues the public library's role of offering universal access to knowledge for each member of society. However, despite including works that investigate the progressive aspects of complex new technologies and their potential to reach a wide public, the exhibition avoids idealizing them, because the technological leap for some has been paralleled by dispossession and an increase in poverty for others. The project *Degenerated Political Art, Ethical Protocol* (2014) by **Núria Güell** and **Levi Orta** uses the financial and symbolic infrastructure of art to establish a company in a tax haven. With help from financial advisors, the newly established "Orta & Güell Contemporary Art S.A" is able to evade taxes on its profits. The company will be donated to a local activist group as a tool for establishing a more autonomous financial system, thus using the contradictory mechanisms of financial capitalism as tools in the struggle against the very system those tools were designed to support.

[6] **Bertolt Brecht, "Against Georg Lukács," in Aesthetics and Politics: The Key Texts of the Classic Debate within German Marxism (London: Verso, 2002), 81**

The exhibition also looks into artistic practices in which social and communal messages are conveyed through folk or amateur practices, insisting on the importance of popular art—not as an ideologically "neutral" appreciation and inclusion of objects made by children, persons with mental illness, or the disadvantaged, but because it creates new forms of sociability, because it is popular in the Brechtian sense of *"intelligible to the broad masses," and because it communicates between presently ruling sections of society and "the most progressive section of the people so that it can assume leadership."* [6] **Ardmore Ceramic Art Studio** is an artists' collective founded in 1985 in the rural area of Ardmore in South Africa. As a reaction to official government silence on AIDS, the artists made ceramics that, in addition to commemorating fellow artists lost to AIDS, explain how the disease spreads and the possible methods of protection. Expressing important ideas related to HIV prevention, this didactic pottery is used as a far-reaching tool for raising awareness. **Primitivo Evanán Poma** is an artist from the village of Sarhua in the Peruvian Andes populated by indigenous people, many of whom migrated to Lima during the second half of the twentieth century due to economic hardship and the devastating effects of the "internal conflict" of 1980–2000. Art produced with the Association of Popular Artists of Sarhua uses the pictorial style of their native village to address social concerns and point out the many-sided discrimination of indigenous people in Lima, thus becoming a catalyst for building community self-awareness and solidarity.

In his film *June Turmoil* (1968), **Želimir Žilnik** documents student demonstrations in Belgrade in June 1968, the first mass protests in socialist Yugoslavia. Students were protesting the move away from socialist ideals, the "red bourgeoisie," and economic reforms that had

brought about high unemployment and emigration from the country. The film ends with a speech from **Georg Büchner**'s revolutionary play *Danton's Death* (1835), delivered by stage actor **Stevo Žigon**—one of the many prominent public figures and artists who joined the protest in solidarity with the students' cause. The film's finale testifies to the centrality of education and knowledge to the socialist worldview and shows how the barriers separating "high" and "low" culture can be broken in crucial moments of political radicalization.

The question of the reach of popular art and its relation to high culture and art institutions can often be observed through the position of the autodidact and by resisting the authority of formal education and the ever-increasing professionalization of the art field. Beyond the refusal to follow the customary and accepted paths to the career of art-professional, the approach of developing knowledge through self-education and peer learning offers the possibility of building one's own curriculum and methodology, as well as moving away from ossified and oppressive intellectual positions. Trained as a painter, in the early 1930s **Hannah Ryggen** taught herself to weave tapestries to comment on the political events of her time, such as the rise of fascism, the economic crisis of 1928 and its devastating effects on people's lives, Benito Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, the German occupation of Norway, and the Spanish Civil War. Using "traditional" techniques, she created a powerful body of politically progressive work imbued with pacifist, communist, and feminist ideas. Since the mid-1970s, **Mladen Stilinoviç** has been developing artistic strategies that combine words and images, using "poor" materials to engage the subjects of pain, poverty, death, power, discipline, and the language of repression. His pamphlet-like, agit-poetic works offer laconic commentary on the absurdity and crudity of power relations and the influence of ideology in contemporary life.

> *People get ready for the train is coming*
> **— Curtis Mayfield,** "People Get Ready"[7]

Bringing to the fore a number of works that center on the question of political organization and art's capability to produce imagery able to provoke strong emotional responses, the exhibition affirms the role of art in creating revolutionary subjectivity and explores how forms of popular art reflect the ideas of political movements, evoking the original meaning of the word propaganda, which can be defined as "things that must be disseminated." The work by **Emory Douglas** included in the exhibition was created for *The Black Panther,* the newspaper of the Black Panther Party published during their struggle against racial oppression in the United States from 1966 until 1982. A number of artistic and propaganda activities were integrated into the Black Panther Party program, and as their minister of culture Douglas produced numerous posters and newspaper pages with strong political messages against police brutality and for every person's equal rights to basic housing, employment, free education, and guaranteed income.

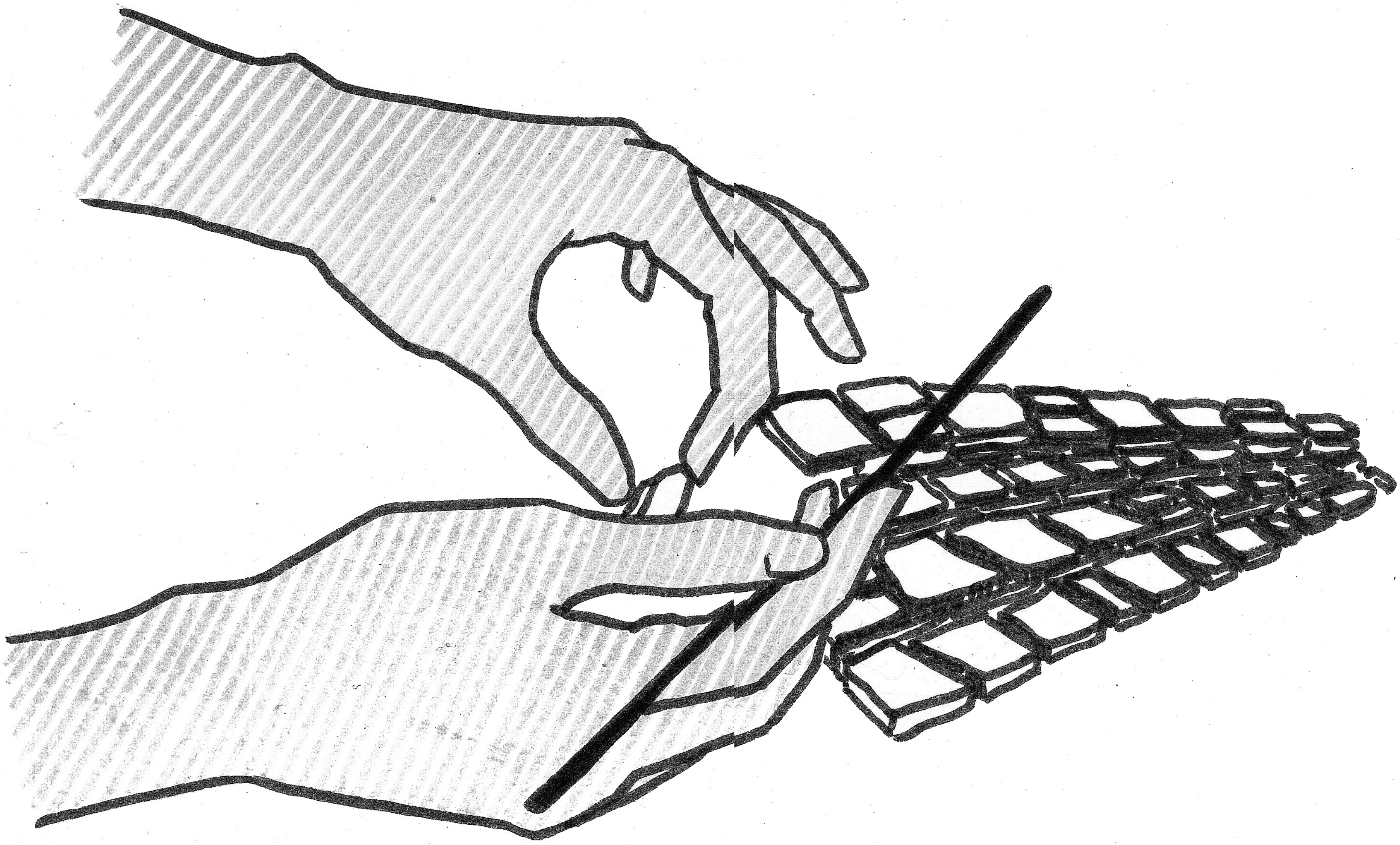
During the antifascist and revolutionary People's Liberation War in Yugoslavia (1941–1945), numerous expressions of Partisan art contributed to the creation of a new revolutionary subjectivity and the articulation of revolutionary struggle, in the process changing the notion of art and the understanding of its autonomy. *The Mozambican Institute* by **Catarina Simão** researches the film archives of the Mozambican Liberation Front, or FRELIMO. As a part of their struggle against Portuguese colonial rule, and in an attempt to fight illiteracy, FRELIMO created

[7] The song "People Get Ready" by Curtis Mayfield from 1965 became an emblematic protest song of various civil rights and revolutionary movements in the 60's and 70's in the US. The original spiritual message embodied in Mayfield's lyrics: "People get ready, there's a train a comin' (...) Don't need no ticket, you just thank the Lord" was transformed by Black Panthers' R&B band The Lumpen into the rendition: "We said people get ready; Revolution's come; Your only ticket; Is a loaded gun".

the Mozambican Institute in Dar es Salaam in 1966 to enable study outside of the educational framework organized by colonial rule. Working with the remains of the institute's film archive kept in Maputo, Simão reinterprets and researches this heritage in which political struggle intersected with radical educational and artistic ideas.

Many new models and alternatives to the current social system have been proposed, but applying what we already know on the individual and collective level is much more challenging than acquiring that knowledge. *Really Useful Knowledge* affirms the repoliticization of education as a necessary condition for recovering politics and pedagogy as a crucial element of organized resistance and collective struggles. The exhibition brings together artistic works imbued with ideas that reconfigure social and intimate relations, and it attempts to create an interchange of convictions and histories in order to infect viewers with the works' proposals, convictions, and dilemmas.

What, How & for Whom (WHW) is a curatorial collective formed in 1999. WHW organizes a range of production, exhibition, and publishing projects, and since 2003, they have been directing city-owned Gallery Nova in Zagreb. What? How? and For Whom? are the three basic questions of every economic organization, and are fundamental to the planning, conception, and realization of exhibitions, and the production and distribution of artworks, and the artist's position in the labor market. These questions formed the title of WHW's first project, in 2000 in Zagreb, dedicated to the 152nd anniversary of the Communist Manifesto, and became the motto of WHW's work and the name of their collective.



The Pitfalls of Institutional Education

Ahmet Öğüt

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BEIRUT—*The Silent University* operates at the intersection between contemporary art and modern pedagogy in a space filled with misconceptions about culture and institutionalized art practices. Cultural institutions such as public and private museums, non-profit art institutions, and private art and cultural foundations employ models of education that are radically different in their methods and structures from educational models practiced by institutions with a focus purely on teaching. Specifically, traditional universities are characterized by centralized bureaucratic structures and an expanding administrative apparatus, leading to sprawling costs and the reproduction of class distinctions. At their core, culture and art practices are inherently disposed towards transient projects, while pedagogy on the contrary requires extended commitment.

The Silent University, which was founded in London in 2012, aims to bridge the divide between art and institutionalized pedagogy by suggesting a new structure, not as an alternative, but as a parallel knowledge transfer platform. It is specifically geared toward refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants who are degree holders with a professional background who can no longer gainfully practice their trade due to their status and their exclusion through the political and social system.

Misconceptions about socially engaged art practices appropriating pedagogical methods are visible in the way we speak of these artistic practices. *"There is a certain slippage between terms like 'education,' self-organized pedagogies,' 'research,' and 'knowledge production,'"* as **Claire Bishop**, in her book *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship,* quotes **Irit Rogoff.** While all these terms have distinct meanings, they are too often used interchangeably. Most importantly, artistic pedagogical practices need to be emancipated from commonly used terminologies such as "projects" and "workshops" referencing them as "tests" or "short-term engagements." On the contrary, pedagogic practices require long-term engagement, commitment, and determination. This faulty characterization is built outward from and perpetuated by the internal administrative and bureaucratic structure of most art institutions. Especially in the field of art, most institutions show a lack of capacity to invest the required long-term commitment, reducing artistic engagement to short-term practices and mere experimentation.

Bishop focuses her analysis on independent artists who are involved with long-term pedagogic efforts. While these are important examples to be aware of in order to gain a better understanding of how alternative systems can develop from self-organized autonomous practices and how they can be sustained long-term, the perspective must be confined to more firmly institutionalized cases in order to better understand the fundamental intersection between art and pedagogy.

Strong education and learning departments are important components of good art institutions. But transforming entire institutions into pedagogic spaces by failing to compartmentalize departments is excessive and in fact does not even replicate typical educational structures. Only when individuals leading such institutions challenge bureaucratic and administrative structures by changing the policies with creative strategies, rather than bringing in artists and cultural practitioners for temporary collaborations, can we arrive at a truly successful pedagogic practice. Concrete results will only arrive when policymakers, artists, cultural practitioners, and institutions all come together in genuine and sustained collaboration. This is the core idea behind the Silent University.

FIRST ERROR: BUREAUCRACY

Cultural institutions should learn to adopt characteristics of adhocracy rather then bureaucracy. Decentralization and participatory horizontal models of transferring knowledge must be inevitable priorities. Decision-making and proactive effort must be designed as non-hierarchic processes involving all members of the organization. This will only become possible when individuals leading the institutions hold on to their visionary priorities, even at the risks of challenging the institutional profile.

In his text *The Promise of Deschooling,* **Matt Hern** describes the scale of school bureaucracy as monstrously wasteful and schooling as a depressing, oppressive, authoritarian, centralized, compulsory and regimented environment—designed to monitor our daily lives and control the way we spend our time. When it comes to pedagogy, art and cultural institutions should not replicate the typical school structure, but instead should follow a new transformative vision. Cultural institutions need to be aware of the difference between management and engagement when welcoming the public. The true engagement of their publics should be the core priority of every action, leaving room for freedom and flexibility instead of falling victim to strict health, safety, security, insurance, and display restrictions.

Silent University is a challenging institution within different host institutions, which establishes it's own adhoctratic structure while being fully recognized by the hosting institution.

SECOND ERROR: ADMINISTRATION

Pedagogical establishments and large-scale cultural institutions also diverge from each other in their administrative structures. "Schools are huge businesses and they command massive amounts of capital, huge administrative apparatuses, they have enormous workforces and sprawling facilities," writes the Austrian scholar **Ivan Ilic**. He uses a governmental plan known as Title One, which took place between 1965 and 1968, as an example: *"Over $3 billion were spent in U.S. schools to offset the disadvantages of about six million children. It was the most expensive compensatory program to date ever attempted anywhere in education. In the course of this program no significant improvement was detected in the learning of these 'disadvantaged' children."*

This astonishing fact is explained by the diversion of the money to "administrative costs," instead of going directly to pedagogical measures addressing the specific situation and the actual needs of the disadvantaged children. The reality of these expenses is that they painfully limit the projects that an institution can imagine and undertake. Another prominent example of expense concerns carrying the day is the dismissal of globally renowned artist, activist, and educator Joseph Beuys from *Düsseldorf's Kunstakademie* after his accepting too many students into his course. Beuys did not see the School as a place for certified and registered teachers offering the students a service to gain a certificate, rather he was envisioning a new kind of learning place that could be open to anyone who wanted to engage in an open space of free exchange, shared interest, and mutual non-hierarchical experience based learning. Cultural institutions inherently share the advantage to be able to address, engage, and integrate a wide range of public and therefore hold the capacity to turn themselves into learning centers that invite everyone to freely meet and exchange knowledge.

THIRD ERROR: CLASS DISTINCTION

Pedagogical establishments also differ from cultural institutions in the establishments' endemic perpetuation of class divisions. The enormous levels of debt shouldered by participants in the mainstream education system constitute, in the words of **Franco Berardi Bifo**, "*a form of slavery.*" Bifo also writes that, *"the indebtment is the new condition of submission."* It is ironic when, as a petition on *MoveOn states*, the interest on federal subsidized Stafford student loans is set to increase this summer, Wall Street banks are granted inappropriately low rates. Meanwhile, *Strike Debt,* a collective student movement organization, paved the way for alternative debt bailout strategies such as *Rolling Jubilee*—a network of debtors who liberate each other through mutual aid. They buy distressed debt from financial firms, often for pennies on the dollar, and then cancel it so that borrowers do not have to repay.

In this context, Cultural Institutions should promote strategies that offer equal learning opportunities to everyone regardless of class distinctions.

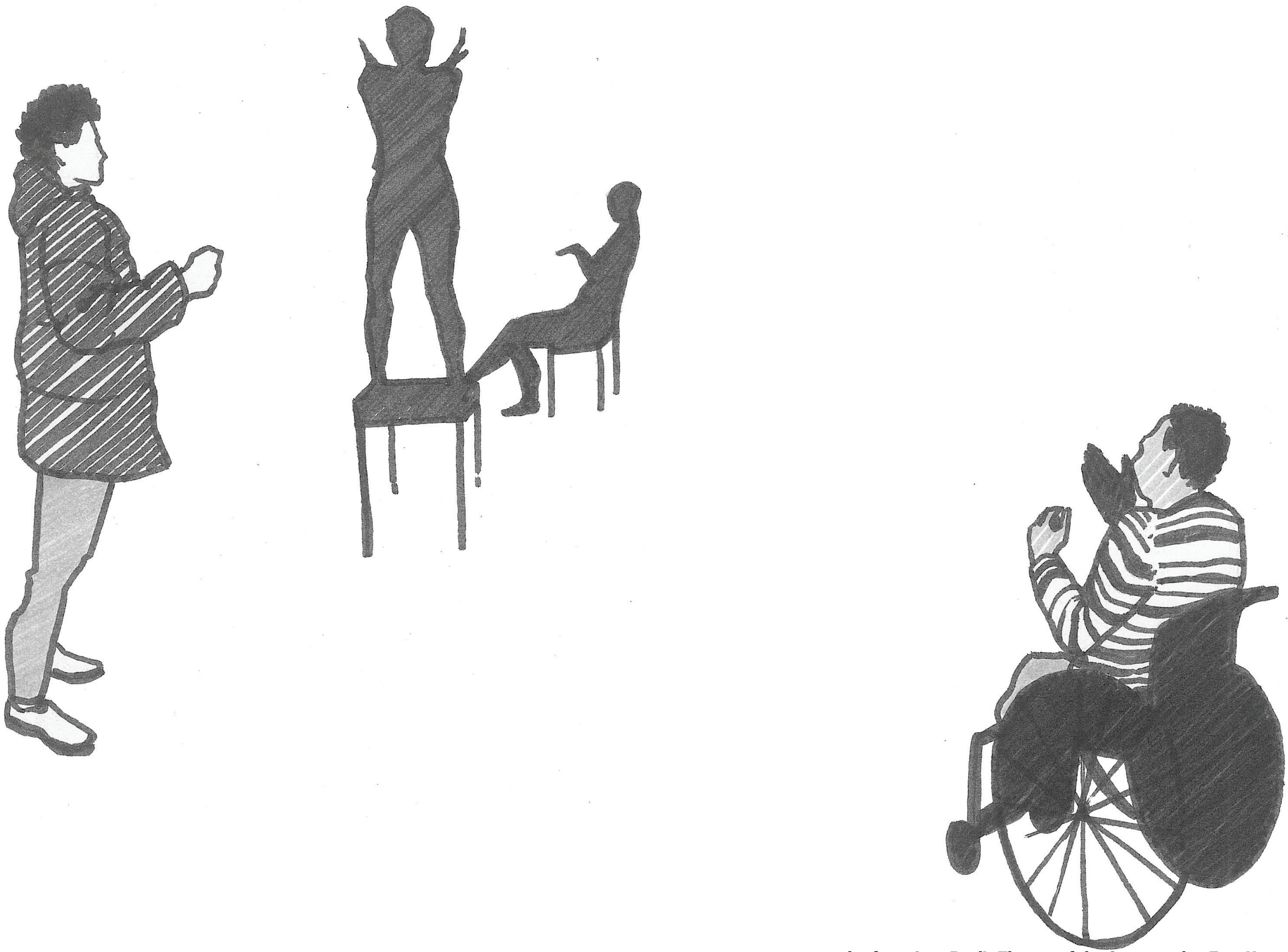
THE SILENT UNIVERSITY: VALUE IN PLACE OF SERVICE

Given the pronounced differences between pedagogy and cultural institutional practice, where does an organization like *the Silent University* fall? The Silent University defines itself as "an autonomous knowledge exchange platform by and for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants" who hold professional backgrounds but cannot gainfully practice their trade due to the limitations of their political and social status. By inventing alternative currencies in place of money or free voluntary service, the *Silent University* creates a process of exchanging knowledge and experience that is mutually beneficial to everyone involved in order to allow democratic access to education

beyond social hierarchies and class distinctions. Initiated at Tate and *Delfina Foundation,* London, in 2012, the Silent University has already reached out beyond the UK. Currently, *Tensta Konsthall* is hosting *the Silent University* in Stockholm and collaborations in Paris, Athens and Berlin are in planning. In its operations in London and Stockholm, the *Silent University* relies on the collaboration with local art institutions, community, and education centers, as it uses the existing facilities and networks of these various institutions. With these community contacts, the Silent University activates the all too often unrecognized knowledge of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants that have been condemned to silence in their new countries of residence. Instead of awaiting the accreditation and legitimization through the established institutional structures, the *Silent University* concentrates on direct measures and immediate action, defying the deleterious aspects of the modern educational system in an act of genuine social liberation. **Beirut, 2013**

Ahmet Ögüt is an

artist working across a variety of different media. With an eye for daily encounters his works address topics such as structural inequality, state suppression, censorship and forms of resistance. Singular acts of non alignment, civic unrest or collective struggles against militarized powers inspire the aesthetic and thematic reflections that occur in his work, and his reflection on the institutional ecology surrounding his practice.



exercise from Aug. Boal's Theater of the Oppressed at Free Home University

Performing the Struggle: Dispatch from Displacement

Alessandra Pomarico

The 2016 winter session of *Free Home University* has further advanced the exploration around practices of solidarity, engaging more deeply in some aspects of our aesthetic/political/discursive/and immersive inquiries, and through analyses of the ways neoliberalism impacts local communities and territories.

In the past, we had investigated the theme of solidarity through sound walks, storytelling, “political therapy,” dance, vogu’ing, collectively meditating, dreaming, drawing, farming, mask-making, cooking, and living together in shared spaces; through readings, Socratic conversations, convivial field visits, and collaborative and regenerative work with comrades and friends particularly from the LGBTQI communities and within the asylum seekers’ protection centers.

After two years of collaborations with a group of asylum seekers, mutual visits paid, different processes shared, and close friendship established, we started to have a better understanding of the many challenges and the complex situation they live in, from the moment they start their journey, traveling from border to border, getting imprisoned in Lybia, getting raped, getting smuggled, robbed, beaten up, then rescued in the Mediterrenean, and moved to refugee centers (if not detention camps), confined in existential and legal limbo, until they are eventually accepted in ‘spaces of protection’ and eventually (less and less) granted asylum status. This is not the end of their trouble, but is at least the recognition of something and an official paper about their condition and residency permit. Those who are not officially recognized as refugees risk being deported or retreating to live in the shadows.

For all of them, as well as for most of the economic migrants, our cities in Europe are inhospitable, racist, xenophobic, violent, the sites of new form of oppressions and labor exploitation; the bureaucracy is impossible to navigate when not openly designed to discourage forms of autonomous sustenance; the “hospitality centers” have very little of the welcoming hospitality harbored in their names, especially when, placed in the middle of nowhere with no connection to transportation, and managed through outsourcing companies that normally disrespect material and immaterial needs, psychological and physical difficulties, condition of trauma or emotional distress.

In this *Free Home University*’s session, the call was to co-create work that strives to intertwine their stories/struggles with ours, bringing up a common platform of solidarity and understanding, allowing for multiple perspectives and tactics to navigate the reality to emerge.

Also, one of our artistic interests (and preoccupations) is related to performativity, considered for its possibility to embody, raise voice, and perform the struggles, without making a spectacle of those subjects in struggle or without speaking at their place. With this challenge in mind, we researched different theatrical traditions rooted in political and didactic commitment, coming from people with a dissident experience (**Boal, Brecht, Freire**) or militant engagement (**Bread and Puppet Theater**).

Some of the activities were designed to create a collective rhythm and to build the necessary trust for sharing our stories, in the absence of a common language, and within our various social, cultural, and geographic backgrounds, considering our differences and our different privileges. **Christina Tomoupolous**, one of the participant, recalls:

> *“What are the daily obstacles some of us are forced to face, in this time of artificial borders? What might a group coming from different parts of the world can achieve together in fourteen days? Around fifteen strangers and near-strangers meeting, learning from each other through an intense yet temporary everyday life together, trying to build bridges in a time of walls, fear, suspects, separation, bans, and hyper-mediated hate... All of us were far from home, each of us in different ways: some forced to leave, some with the option of movement. Perhaps being in another place, “away from home”, gives us a way to speak and listen, to risk, to try*

things out; unconsidered approaches, grounding discussions in context, attempts for actions. In between our dense performative workshops, we also cooked and ate together, and spent time just talking and hanging out. During some of our lunches we shared texts that have been influential for us. At the end of our two weeks together, when it was almost time to say goodbye—after all we had shared and learnt, after our public performance and final party, after our last home cooked dinner—I asked **A, Am** *and* **L***: Is there anything urgent you would like to share with the world? Something you would like to write, that is important for you to communicate right now? And they started to share their story. All three stories involve blindness: sometimes inflicted, sometimes mysterious and sometimes willing."* **[1]**

It is important to quote part of **Augustine**'s story here, as it informed the learning of our session and brought a different way of listening.

"What really goes on in a Libyan prison? I was in Libyan prisons. Five, to be precise. While I was in these prisons the IOM and WHO paid visits. The Libyan police would not allow those of us who would speak up about what is really going on.Rather, they selected people that would speak about what would benefit the officers. On the days when we were expecting the visits, they would clean the entire prison, the bathrooms, the surroundings, maintain the whole place as if it always looks like that. They would hide the reality.

Then the police put fear in the minds of the people that would speak, making it clear that if they say anything bad, as soon as the officials left they would be killed. Maybe this is the reason why IOM and WHO are ignorant of what is going on.

All the organizations and the police want deportations. The police get more money if they deport people. That is why the police in Libya arrest people left and right. Every day they count the prisoners. They tell us, "Today we deport Nigerians," "tomorrow those from Gambia." And they keep arresting more people in the streets. When I asked the new people, I would hear the same story: they were coming back from work and the police picked them up. Same story every day. They even go to houses in which they have heard that black people live, and they throw them in prison. Libya is not safe, and I feel the UN is aware of all this.

I was transferred from Sara Dine prison to White House prison, from White House to Underground prison, where almost a thousand people are kept. They had not seen the sun for more than a year. Much pain here. It's not easy to recall all this. In the prison, two people I knew died. They gave up. I was talking to them every day.

People are dying silently in Libya's prisons and its seems that Europeans lack awareness. People are being taken from one prison to another, one kind of torture into another.

[1]
All three interviews were published in the WHAT'S THERE TO LEARN: A WORKBOOK of Free Home University (2018) by PS Guelph; as wel as in the vis-a-vis magazine, available online at artseveruwhere.ca

Twelve hours we were in the Mediterranean Sea coming here to Italy. I didn't know what was going to happen. The boat broke in the middle of the sea. I believe Italy may be the worst place. The way we are treated...They stop us on the street...Even if we speak Italian, they won't listen to us. They tell us, "you were not forced to come here." There are many difficulties and a lot of pain. It has not been easy. Sometimes I don't know if it's better here in Italy or in my home, in Nigeria. I really don't know. In Nigeria senators received almost 2.03 million (Nigerian naira) as a salary every month. The deputy president receives 2.31 million and the president of Senate receives 2.48 million. This is a monthly salary for just one person! There are good resources there, in terms of oil, but because of corruption the refineries are not working, they export oil to other countries, and the oil is then imported back to Nigeria, all because of corruption and embezzlement.

Only two times have I felt happy during this year I have spent in Italy. The first time was with Silvio when we did a shadow theater workshop. The second was yesterday evening's performance at the end of *Free Home University*'s session.
It was really wonderful and beautiful and I felt like a new-born baby. Everyone there were the best people I have ever met in my life. They were all open and willing to understand. They were sharing our pain and thanks to their understanding, I felt that there is always life, that all hope is not lost. That we should keep on fighting. Because when there is life, there is always hope."

The session was collectively organized to also allocate time for everyone to propose and lead exercises according to the various interests in the group. If this choice challenged the possibility to unfold some of the methods proposed, it was indeed a decision to organize our time more horizontally. A way to break the boundaries between "mentors" and "fellows" and the entitlement of the more professionalized among us, exposing the group to the emergence of a more collective process of decision-making, its joys and frustrations, allowing us to practice patience, respect, and support for each other despite our different perception of what was needed, productive, expected, or even desired.

We did a lot, maybe too much or probably not enough.

Here is a list of some of the things WE DID:

WE REVISITED the tradition of political "cabaret" as in **B. Brecht/K. Weill/K. Valentin** — a strategy to "educate and entertain for the beer-hall or the street";

WE READ from **Brecht**'s *Me-ti*, **John Berger**'s *A Seventh Man,* **bell hooks**'s *Teaching to Transgress and Belonging*, **vis-á-vis**: voices on asylum and migration magazine, and from some of our own texts around radical pedagogy (and other radical thinking);

WE USED **Augusto Boal**'s *Theatre of the Oppressed/ Forum Theatre* to stage our stories, and to build awareness and allow participation from the audience (we brought this practice to an art high school, and we tried it out with a general audience in our theatre);

WE EXPLORED the tradition of shadow theatre and theatre of images to articulate interpersonal power dynamics, explore race, gender, age, sexuality, physical, mental, and emotional conditions affecting our relationships;

WE WORKED with our bodies through dance and movement to get to know each other, to share our scars, to have fun, and to find a balance with the more intellectual and discursive side of our practices;

WE HAD a conversation around places of safe havens in Europe and what it would take to transform our residency program into one for artists at risk, what complexities exist, and what type of knowledge and networks we would need to implement;

WE BUILT a giant face puppet with papier maché technique;

WE LEARNT about the tradition of Cantastorie from around the world and from different historical moments, and we participated in one reporting on Aleppo's siege and the «last messages» civilians were writing to the world;

WE WATCHED "The Tragedy of Africa," a video discourse of **Patrice Lumumba**, followed by a bold conversation with the African residents of a refugee center. The following day we discussed, with them, refugees' rights and activism with leaders from the Lampedusa in Hamburg and the United African Women of Greece movements; we learnt that it was not so simple to invite them into our space, even though they are supposed to be free to move around in the city;

WE COOKED every meal together, learning recipes from all over the world, chatting in the kitchen and co-creating a very special fusion with Franco-Brasilian, Greek-Iranian, Sierra Leonean, Italian-Nigerian-Finnish-Anglo-Malian, Russian-Leccese combination that any chef would have envied;

WE MARCHED with one high heel shoe in front of the house of the first openly transgender woman and sex worker of Lecce, who was stigmatized all her life and refused a religious funeral (although the Church didn't refuse to accept the donation of her house and other properties);

WE WROTE, danced, played, sang, and whispered postcards to redefine what is home and what it is to be a foreigner;

WE LEARNED to see faces everywhere;

WE LEARNED how to be more self-reflexive, and that we should only speak from direct experience and not for others;

WE LEARNED to include children in our routines, and that all our lives are fragile;

WE EVEN FINALLY PRODUCED our learning cabaret, out of one single rehearsal, the very same day of the show, conceived as a collage of our exercises for an audience of family and friends from the refugee centers, including social workers and administrators, not to make a spectacle but to share our process and the collectively built space where we felt safe and brave. It was called *Here to struggle/here to stay. Learning cabaret beyond the surFACE*.

These different methodologies and practices helped us to better understand our possibilities and responsibilities as carriers and holders of people's stories, and as storytellers of the struggle.

Scars, Giant Face, Ferocious Breakdance, and Other Learning Props to Perform the Struggle (as Remembered by a Participant)

Nikolay Oleynikov

CAST:

ABIMBOLA (Abimbola Odugbesan): Nigerian freedom fighter, dedicates most of his time to self-organized refugee groups like *Lampedusa in Hamburg*, Here to Participate (program for Refugee teachers), and *Silent University Hamburg*. He is keen to struggle alongside his African sisters to revolt against patriarchy.

ALESSANDRA (Alessandra Pomarico): translates as our cabaret unfolds. She is the initiator, host, and participant of every *Free Home University (FHU).*

A.B.: Asylum seeker from Mali and eager learner as his perfect Italian shows. He would like to become a baker and loves any occasion to learn collectively.

A.E.: Nigerian student seeking asylum in Italy who is conscious, steady, and meditative. Among other talents he can turn his hands into a musical instrument.

BARBARA (Barbara Toma): Maitresse de conference of the Cabaret, co-leading our inquiry. She is from Lecce, but she moved around as a dancer, choreographer and theater directress. Interested in making everyone explore body politics and relationships through movement.

CLAUDIA (Claudia Signoretti): Co-leading our inquiry through the method of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. She also translates and listens deeply to everyone in the room.

CLARE (Clare Dolan): Puppeteer and cantastoria performer from the US, member of Bread and Puppet Theater, co-leading our inquiry through the pageant tradition.

CHRISTINA (Christina Thomopoulos): Artist and activist from Athens, engaged in support for refugees' rights and dignity and in other political struggles.

ELWOOD (Elwood Jimmy): Member of FHU curatorial collective, from a First Nation community of Canada. He is a cultural activist, and the sweetest strawberry.

J.M.: Asylum seeker who got hurt trying to help during a fight at the refugee center. As a consequence he suffers from some physical impairment (though this didn't restrain him from trying the one high heel shoe march with us).

KUROSH (Kurosh Dadgar / Hossein Shabani): Painter-preacher-methodologist and refugee activist living in asylum in Athens, originally from Iran.

LAURETTA (Lauretta Macauley): Originally from Sierra Leone, she has spent 20 years living in Athens. She is a human rights activist and founder of *United African Women in Greece*, and was key in changing the legislation for migrants' children born in Greece. She is distributing her encouraging "BRAVO!" and secretly collecting recipes from our FHU magic kitchen.

LILTREZ@BROCUS: An incredible breakdance performer and cool free spirit from Nigeria, where he was an entertainment artist. Seeking asylum in Lecce.

MARITA and IVOR (Marita Mukkonen and Ivor Stodolsky): The curatorial duo Perpetual Mobile based in Helsinki and Berlin. Lately, they have been developing the Artists at Risk safe haven project.

MAVI (Mavi Veloso): A so-called "PhD" of FHU for her enduring participation in the program. A transgender performer from Sao Paulo who lives and works between Brussels and the Netherlands.

N.A.: Asylum seeker from Nigeria. He is blind and always keen to perform, dance, and play. He is also a basket weaving master.

NO: One and only

PAULETE (Paulo Sharlach): From Sao Paulo, he is an artist, queen of the kitchen, and seeker with transforming identities. He will stay in Lecce longer to run informal gatherings around cooking and storytelling.

R.A.: Asylum seeker from Iraq. Despite being in a wheelchair, he "is up for anything" as he said (in a bold Swedish accent) in 4 languages, which he proved on many occasions.

RAPHA (Raphael Daibert): Another so-called "PhD" of *FHU* for his obstinate participation in the program. He is a queer artist and organizer from Sao Paulo, part of Lanchonete.org and Cidade Queer. He could not make the cabaret but informed its learning.
Silvio (Silvio Gioia) Co-leading the session with the use of shadow theater, magic, and a sense of humour.

QUI per LOTTARE: LEARNING BEYOND the SURFACE

It's Seven. The night before we all part. The audience starts to arrive for the "performance." They are mostly social workers from the different organizations that host refugees and asylum seekers in the area. Several refugee families with kids arrive, as well as neighbors and friends from Lecce. Some are faces from the local LGBTQI* community, some from the art crowd.

PRE-ACT: SOME SHADOWS, SOME LIGHT and a HUGE POT of RED HOT BLACK-EYED PEAS

SILVIO seduces everyone into entering the dark theater, where a giant white screen stands in the middle. Words, tags and letters spin on the vaulted ceiling. What was our group practice just a few days ago, now becomes magic for children and adults. The same simple exercises are transformed into a play: dialectics of black and white, shade and light, day and night, power and struggle, close and distant, man/woman/queer, rest/unrest/arrest, internal and external, local and global, personal and political, enemy and anaemia. It takes a good 40 minutes to unfold; the audience takes part as well. Everyone is mesmerized, touched, and in high spirits.

ENTR'ACTE:

a banquet of authentic African dishes with the spiciest beans ever, made by LAURETTA and paired with local primitivo wine.

ACT 1
THE FUNERAL PROCESSION | RHYTHMS OF DISCONTENT

Three—two—one: Action! CHRISTINA, AUGUSTINE, NO and PAULO start their procession limping *alla marcia* down the stairs. They hold a pretty big coffin-like thing on their shoulders. Each of them wears only one high-heel shoe, as we did earlier in the week in the queer guerrilla street exercise lead by MAVI. The public joins the procession, following the marchers. The rhythm always shuffles from a samba of the oppressedto the hip-hop beat of the discomforted, reaching its height in the disco of the discontented. CLARE starts to play accordion, inviting the crowd back into the theater. The marchers enter first and wait on stage for people to be seated.

Everyone is in. The music stops, marchers stand still on stage.

ALESSANDRA: We dedicate this action to the memory of our friends SHARAFAT and AMADOU and many other brothers and sisters, beloved and unknown, who've lost their lives in the struggle. May they
Rest in Power.

The full group takes the stage.

[1 min pause]

ACT 2
RESURRECTION OF THE FACE | WHOSE FACE IS THAT?

Marchers put the pretty big coffin-like thing upright, and everyone realizes that it is a giant face, a papier-mâché mask that we made with CLARE during one of her workshops.

The Face is resurrected, and takes its place on the wall above everyone.

CHRISTINA *[greets the public, invites everyone to answer]*: What might this face may represent? Whose face might this be?

MARITA: It's just neutral, it's not even a face, it's actually a mask made of cheap paper and it's not even painted.

LAURETTA: This might be the face of an African woman, who escaped war in her country, facing new troubles wherever she arrives, but fighting for her rights with other women.

ABIMBOLA: I agree, it reminds me of all the African refugees that come to Europe as I did, passing from Lampedusa. This could also be the portrait of the Tragedy of Africa, as Professor Patrice Lumumba would put it.

LILTREZ@BROCUS *[takes a step forward. A cool smile for a second]*: You know, people, as I see this face with almost no eyes on it—it clearly represents one thing to me. Less than a week ago, I had an eye operation, so now I see better what is going on with this world.

[applause]

People from the public start to guess too: they see a caricature of Donald Trump, the portrait of white male supremacy, a grumpy neighbor from across the street.

IVOR: It reminds me of Thelonious Monk—the great pianist and composer. [IVOR takes a stool near the piano and starts playing a light two-note melody. Lights dim down. Artworks by KUROSH pop up projected on the surface of the mask.]

KUROSH: The face is a major concept in my life and for my art. I can see faces in everything. *[He looks at the faces in the room and continues]*: In my country when you see a new face, a new person, we say "Welcome" *[he hugs the air in front of him]*.

INTERMEZZO | WELCOME!

BARBARA takes the stage. She says that in Italy there is also a gesture to welcome people, and she demonstrates how exactly it is done. Then J.M. steps in and without saying too much but smiling widely slightly extends his right hand (which is paralyzed), and almost invisibly shakes the air in front of him. People start to welcome each other, then everyone in the public with their own gesture and languages. Each and every one is greeted personally.

ACT 3
THE SOCIETY OF NOW | THE SOCIETY WE WANT

BARBARA: We've been asking ourselves "WHOSE FACE ISTHIS?", and we have collected many answers. The proposals described some parts of our society, because all of us are parts of small groups, families and bigger collectives; we are all part of society, which is diverse and it is what it is. With CLAUDIA we've been trying to perform two types of society.

CLAUDIA steps in and gives a little introduction about Boal's forum theater, really really brief and clear, literally a couple of important tips. Then she explains what was going on onstage. Meanwhile: [the group makes a tableaux vivant representing THE SOCIETY OF NOW. Everyone takes their position as rehearsed.]

CLAUDIA asks the audience to explain what they see. People react, saying that this society is greedy, not welcoming, ignorant, fragmented, selfish, absorbed by technologies, and violent.

Then CLAUDIA invites the audience to add whatwas missing in the picture, and "church and government's impunity" was added, family abuse too, and a few other unavoidable and precise observations. A grandmother and a child completed the picture.

CLAUDIA claps, and—voila!—the group transforms into a totally different configuration, namely the SOCIETY WE WANT. Here the audience starts to notice *"balance, grace, care, sensitivity, solidarity, equality, justice, generosity, decisiveness, fervor and commitment."* When CLAUDIA asks if something was missing, someone in the audience added a queer family, and the grandma with the grandchild grabbed a book to read together.

[applause]

BARBARA *[steps back in]*: As a SOCIETY OF NOW we all follow what happens in the world. These times are heavy, as countries everywhere face conservative governments, banks throw people out of their houses, and both governments and banks lead people to wars, which also pushes people to leave their homes. So much bad news around us! The media bombards us with bad news. But there is an ancient tradition that emerged from Indian nomadic storytellers that seems to be more reliable than any TV channel, and connects people better than social media.

[BARBARA calls for CLARE.]

ACT 4| BAD NEWS | BACK TO REALITY

This chapter was not performed on our Cabaret (that night CLARE was sick with the flu). She had offered a pageant show for us earlier, the day after the Aleppo attack, as a reaction to it. She had conceived a dedicated chapter during her Cantastoria Performative Seminar Night. We took the liberty to add this piece as a chapter of the Learning Cabaret as it was an integral part of our performative learning process.

[In the form of a classic cantastoria, CLARE, assisted by some participants, starts telling a story in a very poetic way, with simple yet striking metaphoric paintings of red flowers on a green field, under bright blue skies. Different elements are used to evoke the bomb shelling, the burnt houses in the Syrian city under attack, beating on wooden sticks and stumbling newspapers to imitate gunshots and the sound of flames. Through a picture of flying birds and written sentences being extracted from the canvas, CLARE visualizes the tweets that were shared under tragic hashtag #last_message that civilians were sending to the world. The letter from the doctors of Aleppo is read in its entirety.]

ACT 5 | SCARS | HOW WE LEARN

[The stage is left empty, the group comes back]

KUROSH *[in the middle]*: I am familiar with this kind of reality. This reality left scars on my body [points to his shoulders]; i was imprisoned and tortured in my country but I don't want to talk about it.

R.A. *[rolls his wheelchair into the spotlight]*: Me too, I know it very well. There are many scars on my body. Here and here, and there. Well, look at my legs, they are nothing but scars. [R's legs are actually absent]. I was 12 when my town in Iraq was bombed. And one bomb hit my house.

ELWOOD *[pointing to the scar on his leg]*: This is a cut that a drunken man left on me with a bottleneck. Folks from indigenous communities in Canada never go to the hospital or report to the police because we know that, eventually, we are the ones who will get arrested, because of racism and prejudice. That's how some indigenous people are forced to learn not to trust the authorities and to rely on themselves only.

ABIMBOLA *[comes closer to R.A., ELWOOD, and KUROSH, showing a scar on his back]*: This is the mark of violence that can happen in the family. My mom used to teach me by leaving marks on me, so I would not forget the lesson. Well, I don't remember the lesson, and still love my mother, but what I learnt was resistance.

A.: When I was 9 people came to my house and attacked my mother. My father was a policeman and they wanted to intimidate him. Trying to protect my mom, I was hit and lost my eye. I've learnt that it is necessary to protect those who are weak.

ALESSANDRA *[shows a smiley-like scar on her belly]*: This is from a C-section. My beloved daughter was born this way ten years ago. I've learnt not to be afraid to love.

IVOR: When I was seven I tried to climb a wall to reach a beautiful fresh bright-green lawn, a better place to play with my friends. I've got a scar all over my neck up to my chin. I did not unlearn to believe in utopia.

MARITA: I was doing my PhD research on neo-nazi gangs in Finland. One night the gang leader waited for me on my stoop. He stabbed me with a sharpened screw-driver here [points to a scar]. I will never unlearn to fight fascism.

While participants reassemble, BARBARA reports from others who had to leave the session earlier, but wanted to include their scars in this collective sharing.

BARBARA: There was a woman among us, she mentioned she was beaten by her just-a-jealous-guy. And we've learned that violence cannot be confused with love.

There was also a man who pointed to scars that he gave to his daughter, his lovers, and his friends and the regret that he holds. And we've learned to wear those scars that we give to others.

And there was MAVI who shared her invisible scar with us. That scar is in her blood, as she's HIV positive. And we have learned from her how to be strong and celebrate our lives. And how to celebrate our struggle. And how to perform our struggle in our art.

And how to en-live our art.

And how to transform our scars into arms for our fight.

How to fight and to dance ferociously no matter what.

ACT 6 | FINAL (AND ONGOING) DANCE

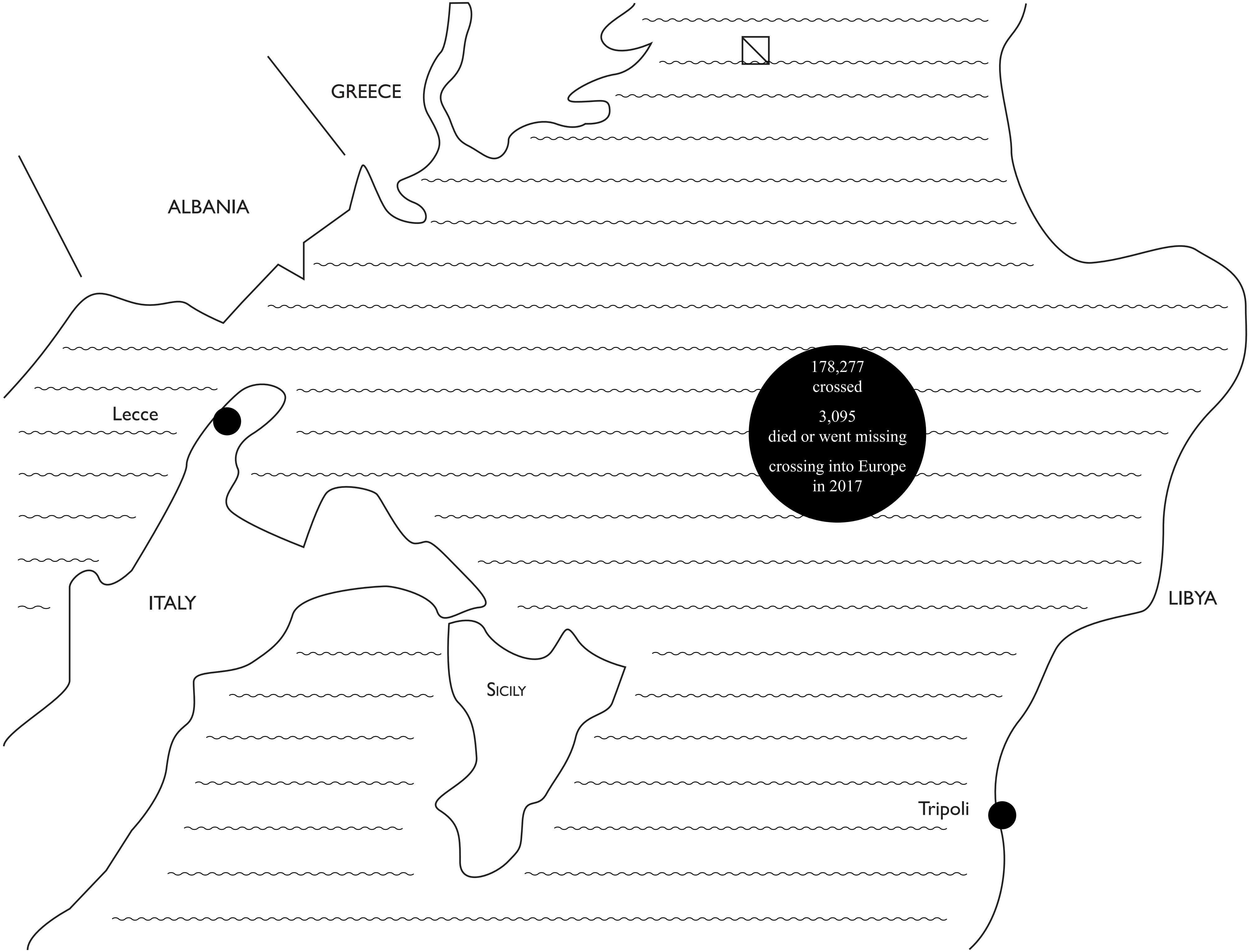
Here comes LILTREZ@BROCUS.
Music starts on his cell phone, then blasts in the full room.
He performs his incredible acrobatic break dance piece.

[everybody claps]

LAURETTA *[enters the circle]*: I will teach you the dance that women do in my part of Africa. Follow me! Everybody please, start by shaking your buttocks, everyone… like this!

[EVERYONE JOINS.
THE CABARET NATURALLY FADES INTO THE JOY OF TOGETHERNESS AND MOVEMENT; THEN THE DANCE FADES OUT ON IT'S TURN,
THE CABARET GOES ON NEVERTHELESS,
AND THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES]




GREECE
ALBANIA
178,277
crossed
3,095
died or went missing
crossing into Europe
in 2017
Lecce
ITALY
LIBYA
SICILY
Tripoli

What We Are Learning: Responses to Pedagogy, Otherwise

roundtable hosted by Alessandra Pomarico at ArtsEverywhere.ca, 2018

As a commissioning editor of **artseverywhere.ca** in the series I had the chance to curate called Pedagogy, Otherwise I began by exploring texts with a diverse range of perspectives. I was interested in focusing on those experiences or experiments resulting from communities of practice and communities of struggle, in which learning spaces are informed by a quest for social justice or ecological activism, with an equal attention on theories, praxis, and aesthetic processes.

Artists are indeed involved in this wider movement of reclaiming learning, and are engaging more explicitly with the inherently transformative and pedagogical elements of art.

The notion of an "otherwise" signaled a shared criticality towards the neoliberal, western-centric, colonial rationale behind education systems. But it also recalls the always shifting, historical, and context-based nature of "radical pedagogy" in challenging existing paradigms.

After commissioning the pieces, I asked other contributors involved in the struggle to reclaim the learning, to participate in a written "round table" and engage in a conversation with those initial texts. I urged them to respond by focusing on their methodologies, tools, stories, places, and languages, and to write from their own, often emergent, pedagogical, ecological, and ontological perspectives.

In this chapter titled What we are learning, we compiled those commentaries from our respondents.

LEARNING HOPE AND ASSEMBLING SKIN

Sarah Amsler

This is a response to eight works in Pedagogy, Otherwise, which I feel connected to through friendships and encounters in two transnational collectives of radical learners and educators – the Ecoversities Network[1] and Gesturing towards Decolonial Futures.[2] The pieces are: Insurgent Learning and Convivial Research: Universidad de la Tierra, Califas – In the Cracks of Learning (Situating Us) – Introduction to Pedagogy, Otherwise – Learning to Learn in a Context of War – Multi-layered Selves: Colonialism, Decolonization and Counter-Intuitive Learning Spaces – The Radical Education Workbook – Radical Pedagogy is NOT – Torpor and Awakening. I write this piece from a small English city on the eve of the third week of a national strike by university workers to refuse the further marketization of our labour. Tomorrow I will party on the picket line with a friend whose work about resisting the "datafication of teaching" was read last week by the Radical Education Forum,[3] which co-authored the Radical Education Workbook published in 2010 upon the last major student demonstrations, and is engaged here.

Learning against-beyond hegemony, to me, feels like falling in love. I know it's happening when my heart beats faster and something in my centre overturns. Making connections, dissolving separations, is learning. So, too, is tending the wounds created when the skin holding one body (of atoms and histories and soul; of knowledge) stretches and tears in order to receive and be refigured by another. So, too, is refiguring reality when we reassemble bodies and lives into no-longer-that and more-than-this and what-might-become. Learning is kinship and promise, and life and death.

[1] Kelly Teamey and Udi Mandel, "Are eco-versities the future for higher education?" (2016) at OpenDemocracy

[2] See www.decolonialfutures.net

[3] Radical Education Forum blog, 26 February 2018

I was tired when I started writing this. I didn't expect to re-cognize connections and wounds that would make my heart race or stomach flip or skin soften. Nor to catch a glimpse of the future real on my horizon of hope, which also contains the shadows of my complicity as a salaried academic working in a neo-imperialist English education system, where learning is valued to the extent that it reflects, affirms and consolidates the Patrix,[4] the Fourth World War,[5] our capitalist Thanatos. Being nanogoverned to embody the logics that fuel this ecological, social and epistemic crisis, and shackled to existentially impoverished[6] institutions through wage slavery, debt and the destruction of community learning, makes it possible to bury the possible. The political construction of hopelessness – including desires to educate to obey, to educate to domesticate, to educate to allow exploitation[7] – is an education in learning how to dis-member ourselves and each other; learning to mock and devalue the dream.

This is why learning hope and re-membering vital connections of possibility are such important parts of today's movements to end reality as we know it, and to host the emergence of worlds that are "more adequate for us, without degrading suffering, anxiety, self-alienation, nothingness."[8] Hence the global wave of interstitial recognition that the pedagogical must be politicised and the political must be made pedagogical.[9] Pedagogy, Otherwise explores how this is happening, what difference it is making, in diverse contexts across the global North and South where individuals and communities are learning to resist colonial-capitalist-patriarchal domination through self-organizing their own "counter-intuitive" learning spaces.[10] Place-times in which we can unlearn, through projects of undoing great and small, the commonsense of patriarchal capitalist modernity – its parameters of possibility for loving, caring, imagining, organising everyday life, knowing one another, being in the world, and co-creating common new realities.

Many of these antihegemonic times and spaces are "Temporary Autonomous Learning Zones"[11] and "Temporary Autonomous Zones of Knowledge Production."[12] They are born, organised, destroyed (sometimes by conflicts and silences within) and overtaken in the cracks and margins of the system. This is often understood as one of their strengths. In situations where aggressive forces of domination have colonized or eviscerated vital relationships, common resources, public space, knowledges and the senses; where society itself appears as a "total factory institution",[13] every collective act of delinking from dominant narratives and framings of reality matters. Every opportunity to witness and practice reciprocity and respect in the most difficult of pedagogical encounters, to get it wrong and dare to trust others to try and make new mistakes again, matters. Every embrace of radical tenderness[14] as we face our own colonial, heteropatriarchal and capitalist monsters matters. Each moment we experience non-exploitative, non-expropriating, non-extractivist, heart-pounding, stomach-turning learning matters. Every time we enable one more atom, idea, muscle, word, deed to be "uncoercively rearranged" such that new horizons of possibility may be revealed – perhaps at once, but often through a cumulative process that we do not yet have the tools to comprehend – matters.

These temporal transformations matter. I do not mean that they matter temporarily, as a foot-in-the-door-until-the-real-revolutions-come. Or that their sole significance is that they may help us to "prefigure" alternative realities. I mean that "utopian gestures"[15] in here and now radical learning space-times have material force as resources of hope and potentialities that play a durable and generative role in the formation of body and soul.[16] They are also the threads that weave together place-based learning communities of resistance to create transnational communities of hope, and that are being used to suture fragile and emergent revolutionary alliances. This is important everywhere, including in the global North where our broken political imagination may, as Boaventura de Sousa Santos contends, render us unable to learn in noncolonial terms that "allow for the existence of histories other than the 'universal' history of the West."[17]

It is only through shedding dying skin and assembling new kin in the radical learning community, represented by the pieces of work referenced here, that I have become able to accept the challenge of understanding my part, as an educator, in the struggle for an other world here. I will pull these threads of transformation as I walk into our action tomorrow, asking, painting, sharing experiences of *Pedagogy, Otherwise* with a "new generation of activists entering into struggles for a non-coercive, anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist education."

[4]
The "Patrix" is Andrew Langford's term for a system of domination. See Gaia University's podcast, "Politics and the Patrix"

[5] and [7]
E. Garcia, "Learning to learn in a context of war", here pp. 76-90

[6]
"Existential poverty", according to V. Andreotti's "Torpor and awakening" at artseverywhere.ca

[8]
Ernst Bloch, The Principle of Hope, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995.

[9]
Sara C. Motta, "Politicizing the pedagogical and politicizing pedagogy" in S. C. Motta and M. Cole, Constructing 21st Century Socialism: The Role of Radical Education, London

[10]
V. Andreotti, "Multi-layered selves...", in this book pp.46-62

[11]
A. Pomarico, "In the cracks of learning", see here pp. 148-175

[12]
M. Callahan, "Insurgent learning...", see here pp. 92-115

[13]
The concept of "total factory institution" brings together what Erving Goffman and Michel Foucault called, in somewhat different ways, "total institutions" with the notion of the "social factory" developed from Mario Tronti's work.

[14]
See the "Radical Tenderness Manifesto" by Dani d'Emilia and Daniel B. Chávez (2015), www.daniemilia.com

[15]
see Radical pedagogy is NOT, see here pp.20-23

[16]
Anna Hickey-Moody and Tara Page, "Making, matter and pedagogy" in Arts, Pedagogy and Cultural Resistance: New Materialisms, New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

My favourite new memories will be the ones where we feel we are not "beginning from scratch"**[18]** but are part of a movement that is "collapsing the system from its very foundations" and learning hope in its ruins.**[19]** It will be temporary and it will matter. To answer Alessandra's question, "How can we fall in love again?" I might say: like this.

[17]
Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Epistemologies of the South and the future" in From the European South 1, accessed
[18]
Ultra-red, Introduction to The Radical Education Workbook
[19]
Garcia, "Learning to learn in a context of war", see here pp. 76-90

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EMERGENT LEARNING-IN-SOLIDARITY
Kelly Teamey & Udi Mandel

Engaging with the words, the visions, the practices, the imaginaries from many of our friends writing in this *Pedagogy, Otherwise* series is to become present, to awaken from any torpor (as described by Vanessa Andreotti) in which day-to-day life in our current world can rather easily entrap us.

Reading these pieces, we are once again in the presence of those—close and far—with whom we have been in a circle, being challenged and provoked, but also cared for and enlivened. We experience a re-connection with many we feel have been with us on a continual and emergent conversation, through an extended walk, over a new and unfolding landscape. Sometimes we walk separately, exploring side-paths or clearing new ones through the bushes and trees. At other times, we re-appear to walk together again and tell stories of what we found.

The conversation with these friends started some years back and led up to two gatherings of what we have named *Ecoversities* (Tamera, Portugal, 2015) and *EARTH University* (Costa Rica, 2017). Each of these *Ecoversities* gatherings brought together 50+ kindred folks from around the world, individuals working or creating in places of higher education who are re-imagining what it means to learn through hopeful and creative experimentations in this age of manifold and urgent crises. Such places can be seen as part of a broader knowledge movement, an emerging alliance of people and communities reclaiming their local knowledge systems and imaginations to restore and re-envision learning processes that are meaningful and relevant to the call of our times.

We had visited many of these Ecoversities as part of our *Enlivened Learning*, a project that began after walking out of academic jobs in 2012, and that, at its center, intended to explore and support the unfolding insurrection connected to the transformation of education systems. As the pieces in this series so eloquently describe, places within this growing knowledge movement overlap in not only critiquing our broken education systems but also in cultivating new stories, practices, possibilities, and emergences that reconnect and regenerate local ecological and cultural ecosystems. (Hence the name *Ecoversities.*)

One strong commitment we had as co-hosts of the Ecoversities Gatherings was that we would be open to the emergent. That we would try to experiment and model other ways of being together and sharing our stories and learnings, to purposefully re-imagine ourselves as a learning collective, to co-create a fragile and temporary learning space. We considered the emergent—or unknown—as that of a wise, hospitable, vulnerable, and non-ego-centric process that would unfold if nurtured and given space. The process of merging such a diversity of cosmological and epistemological orientations and commitments has been incredibly difficult, and, yet also incredibly powerful and transformative. Through our six days

together, in each of the *Ecoversities* gatherings, we had many opportunities to get to know one another's work, day-to-day lives, the difficult questions and challenges we face, as well as our individual and collective hopes and dreams.

In this re-imagined way of learning there is also an emphasis on the reweaving of relationships and friendships, between each other and with the non-human, including our local ecologies. There is the primacy of an ethics and politics of care and an attention to that which is so often left out of educational institutions: the heart—healing, playing, and learning with and across different generations. There is also emphasis on learning how to be together, supportively—to learn and inquire in solidarity with one another and in support of communities and the ecologies we inhabit. And in this re-imagination of learning we are co-creating—and re-creating—other ways of knowing, doing, undoing, becoming, and relating. Through this process there is also an intense vulnerability, which has become one of the deepest learnings, leaving space to an awareness of a seemingly contradictory sensibility. We are calling this sensibility a kind of vulnerable confidence. How uncomfortable it is to remain with a group of people in a space that is seemingly empty! How fragile it is to nurture that and keep egos and projects and desires and voices from drowning out what is waiting to come to life!

Our experiences with Buddhist philosophy and practice in different contexts, refers to emptiness as the pregnant void. As something, or the absence of things, that is filled with life and possibility. But how to practice this at a collective rather than an individual level is an immense challenge! As never before, we feel very strongly the sense of confidence that it is through such a space that the pregnant void can weave its magic and other knowledges, practices, and relationships come into being.

Alongside this fragile and vulnerable confidence that we are each embracing, and also repelling to varying extents, we have also been experimenting with practices of *inquiry-in-solidarity* together. Understandings and practices of our *inquiry-in-solidarity* is also very much emerging. We feel it encapsulates both the sense of healing, of unlearning, and of being open to learning from the other, of weaving social relations and also being reflexive about the ego, our own drives, programs, desires, and our own contexts. A quieting of all of this in relation to the projects, the struggles, the wishes of the other, and of an emerging collective, a greater "we."

The impacts of our being together at the Ecoversities meetings are, for many of us, still being felt as new questions and provocations, as changed sensibilities and practices, as reinvigorated confidence, and perhaps most importantly as new friendships. Many of us who were at the meetings have deepened our friendships and conversations since we met, visiting each other, getting to know more of each other's work and life, exploring collective projects and inquiries. As a loose alliance or community, we have also continued our conversations through regular virtual conversations, furthering our explorations of questions we have in common. This way we continue to share tools, skills, and experiences; co-create joint projects and inquiries; and continue to collectively re-imagine what another form of higher education could look like. As we have found in many places of learning we have visited around the world, to re-imagine higher education invariably involves a different kind of

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Udi Mandel is a

film-maker, writer, educator and father and Faculty in Sustainable Development at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont. Udi's work focuses on regenerative practices for ecologies and communities and the role and possibility of higher education to offer hopeful futures. To this end Udi has co-founded with his partner Kelly Teamey and others the Enlivened Learning project and the Ecoversities Alliance. These projects provide a critique of current higher education systems and a collaboration with alternatives that are emerging from social and ecological movements and indigenous communities across the globe offering innovative practices around sustainable development and regeneration.

relationship between learners, co-learners, and their contexts. Re-learning to be together and the meaning of togetherness, where openness, trust, and care form a foundation and a basis from which to practice inquiry-in-solidarity. In doing so, we are engaging with a politics of care and attempting to reweave relational fabrics that have been rendered too fragile through so many institutions of modernity, including educational institutions. As we become more confident in our vulnerability (or more vulnerable in our confidence) the hope is that such weavings are stretched out across multiple localities around the world.

PEDAGOGIES OF R-EXISTENCE

Gerardo López Amaro

Most humans today have been socialized in the “pathological truths” of capitalism (de Sousa Santos) and in its concurrent “modern desires and attachments” (Andreotti). The isolated, disembodied individual is the center king of the world, numbed by its own illusion of self-sufficiency. A monoculture of the mind, reinforced and reproduced by the global marketplace, school systems, and mass media, reiterate systemic oppressions and (neo)colonial violences weaved into our globalized neoliberal economies. We are currently witnessing a generalized war against relational worlds, waged on behalf of profit-seeking individuals.

This war severs connections, mutilates relationships, and atrophies the senses. Forests, waters, skies, winds, bodies, territories, cultures, and ways of being are turned into resources, to be later engineered as commodities or shaped in theoretical packages for successful careers in universities, corporations, and government offices.

Fortunately, there are—and there have always been—societies in which nothing preexists the relations that constitute them: relational worlds, worlds of interconnectedness, remembering and attunement with the rich vibrancy of interrelatedness (Escobar; Rengifo). These communities teach us relationality as a source of life.

In this context, to exist is to resist. The “rivers” that exist, resist, as do the “mountains,” “seeds,” “land,” or “people.” All of them, “equivocal translations” of more complex sentient entities in other cosmovisions, all of them condemned to be sacrificed in the altar of development and economic growth. For this reason, the defense of life must be at the center of radical pedagogical practices.

But resistance is not our main mission. We came here to celebrate life and the beauty, joy, and pain of her ineffable connections. Relational worlds cannot only resist, they must r-exist.[1] We need “fierce care” and “radical tenderness”[2] to nurture them and actualize their possibilities. A different way of inhabiting the world so that we can collectively enact the pluriverse is mandatory and urgent. For this reason, the defense of life must be at the center of radical pedagogical practices as we must learn to become related again. And for that, we need “pedagogies, otherwise.”

In this sense, the pedagogical task is eminently political, as advocated by popular and radical education approaches. We ought to add an “ontological turn” to the spiral of the relationship between pedagogy and politics. A “cosmopolitics”[3] is needed, one that radically challenges the modern idea of politics, one that is non anthropocentric, non-prescriptive, one that comes before will, and unfolds through open hearts, dis-identified from the identities that have been carved out to contain our unexpressed possibilities and make us fit into coffins.

But…
Is it possible to r-exist
in densely liberal,
uprooted,
stained[4]
worlds

In the practice of the Escuela Campesina[5] we believe it is possible, or at least worth trying. In this itinerant and self-organized school, people from different regions, genders, and cultural backgrounds convene to share experiences on agroecology, natural building, traditional medicine, solidarity economies, and popular art and communication. There are three core principles that organize the work: popular education, political positioning and the "magical-transcendental," understood as a place where people share their relationship to the land and their ways of caring reciprocally so that these ways do not disappear, but rather are named, valued and honored.

From Saint Petersburg to San Jose, from Lecce to Oaxaca, from Nigeria to Greece, in urban streets, milpas,[6] rural areas, museums, cultural centers, refugee centers, cooperatives, schools, and bodies, the texts presented in the Pedagogies, Otherwise section of ArtsEverywhere share practices, tools, and theories to r-exist. They invite us to subvert education and "think-feel" from communities of practice and struggle. To invent new words for new worlds. To perform and create, to cultivate intimacy and deep friendship. To question our subjectivities and good will. To learn and unlearn together from the abundance of experiences and the possibilities of many more possibile imaginaries.

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PhD candidate currently exploring viable spaces informed by politics of consciousness regarding the healing of land and territory, love & intimacy, and labor & livelihood. His interests center on intercultural translation as a political practice of weaving together an anti-imperial, decolonizing, joyful South, and co-creating alternatives to modernity, development ,and extractivism emerging from the grassroots. He is walking passionately the path of autonomous education with the task of imagining spaces of encounter for thinking-feeling together, as part of a planetary struggle for cognitive and ontological justice

Footnotes

[1] I borrow the term from the Colombian artist Adolfo Albán Achinte. For him, rexistencia is "the devices and forms—in terms of organization, production, food, ritual and aesthetics—that communities create and unfold to 'invent life on a daily basis' with dignity, and therefore 'permanecer transformándose.'"

[2] https://danidemilia.com/radical-tenderness/

[3] In this proposal, cosmos "refers to the unknown constituted by these multiple, divergent worlds and to the articulation of which they would eventually be capable" (Stengers, 995).

[4] This is an incomplete translation of the concept ch'ixi developed by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, for whom it is a "talisman word that enables us to go beyond the emblematic identities of ethnopolitics." It's a concept that reveals an "active recombination of opposed worlds and contradictory signifiers, that weaves a fabric at the very border of those antagonist poles" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 226). Although Silvia has applied the concept of "ch'ixi" to the Bolivian society, I propose that it is a helpful concept for other kind of ch'ixi-worlds, such as mine, in Mexico, or others in the planet.

[5] Learn more about the practice of Escuela Campesina.

[6] The milpa is a Mesoamerican agroecological system, typically integrating corn, squash, beans, and chile. It's also the name of the physical space where people farm. And it's also a way of life

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SHE HAS NO LAND BUT SHE KEEPS SHEEP

Jesal Kapadia

There are some people by whom one is so influenced that one never writes about them.
But it is on account of friendship with those of you who are flâneurs, healers, story-tellers, thinkers and witches, whom I haven't seen for a long time, but who are with me in spirit, those of you who take care of the house of language, whose words I recite and channel here. To you all, and to "Learning Hope and Assembling sKin," "I am the space of protest," Multi-layered Selves," I address a word of greeting

The un-used, un-consumed body.
She said: If a woman is physically happy…most people don't think of it as legitimate. Physical hunger should not be dismissed; it is something very basic…We are taught to be ashamed of our bodies from a very young age. She was always known as shameless… one day she will write a story about this – this body has not been used. Enough.
Writing is her real world.
It is where she has lived.

And survived.

They asked: Who is she?

She said: I don’t have a definitive answer to this question, perhaps because she spent all her life trying to escape the very idea that one can be subject to definitions, or categories that reduce life to a sum of roles and identities.
It was she who warned me against certain kinds of inheritances, those complicities.

She said: “Logorare” or wearing-out the unconscious relationships and cultural norms that keep us tied. Sometimes there is such a thing as translating a word or a phrase… using it only once for an occasion, and then forgetting it forever.

*

If we’re on the street together, we are not afraid. For her, dancing, cooking together, taking over the streets is inviting us to play with others, exploring our abilities. It feels like an experience of expansion, dignity and joy. To some it may seem eccentric to embrace lots of people on public roads, as if we should leave our emotions and our bodies outside the political. But what magnificent power is unleashed when our bodies vibrate together, when they cease to be the object of violence to be subjects of rebellion.

She said: To see the body as a space of resistance, but also the collective body and its powers.

We are single, singular and together.

*

She said: Sometimes the line between the system and a revolution is just a river. After all, isn’t the fight between the forces of resistance and the system of domination almost just as old as the Euphrates and the Ganges?

Reading with love, without suspicion. We enter inside, a kind of an enclosed circle from within which we celebrate. There are gatherings on the lawn, on the roof and in the gardens. There is a lot of shade and breeze. Your hands are moving, your fingers and your eyes are moving. And your thoughts register what your body is doing, feeling the dimensions, the spaces, using all sensibilities.

Everything around us is directly connected, like the life that goes around in nature. Every people inhabit the flow of history intertwined with the history of others, and every people contain in its interior the true seed of history that is dissent, so that customs are changed and tradition unfolds in the course of deliberation.

She said: It’s not the sun that rises, but the earth that turns. Not tradition that constitutes a people, but joint deliberation of conflicts.

Listen to the thousands of dissident bodies who are coming together and talking to each other more and more, putting words to what happens to us, giving us new ways to understand, and from here we build a critical view of the world.

*

It has a rhythm I am totally familiar with. It feels instinctively to me that the reason they write this way is that it is like a secret. We feel like we’re in a dream, it makes undoing so much more pleasurable. A constant re-asking of the question, what is it to learn? What is it to learn? Is it to learn to talk about certain things coherently?

She said: Don’t throw away beautifully developed tools. Turn them around. Take the trouble. Know the material so well that you can actually turn the machine around to do something for which it was not designed. Know what you’re supplementing, what kind of shape it has, and then you enter the space so well that you find a point that will be useful against its own rules. You inhabit that space. Cluck. Turn it around. Start using it.

*

White like a fox, cunning like a dove. Rearranging, reordering, we feel like we're in a dream. Looking for the roots of language before it is born on the tip of the tongue, and clearing the space for that waiting, hearing. Between bursts of laughter. Finding resonance.

Resonance… I really like that word. Something like a relationship, neither available nor unavailable, that can be established between two or more of us who do not necessarily live in the same place or at the same time. A way of seeing your own experience that reflects someone else's.

She said: To learn is to follow, find a track. To no longer think the same thing that one thought before. To prevent oneself from becoming the same. You are at the heart of the question.

Jesal Kapadia grew up in Mumbai. Her interests lie in an ethical praxis of being-in-common, and the cultivation of an awareness of art that is place-based, diversified, multiple, small-scale, collective and autonomous. Last year she presented with Mattia Pellegrini "Introduction to She has no land but she keeps sheep" at Sensibile Comune, part of Communism17 in Rome.

RADICAL PEDAGOGIES AS LIVING EXPERIMENTS AND MESSY AFFAIRS

Manish Jain

I am just returning from the *Indian Multiversities Alliance* gathering, recently held in Nagpur, India, co-created by over 30 radical higher education projects from around the country. Every year, more than 5,000 autonomous learners attend programs hosted by the *Multiversities* across India, which seek to de-center, pluralize, regenerate, and connect diverse learning processes, types of knowledge, wisdom, meanings of love, power, and economies outside the realm of official universities and the global economy. They are involved in many spheres such as sustainable living, social justice, compassion, dance and music, healing, community media, spirituality, activism, etc. As I sit to write this note, I still reflect on one of themes that emerged as a common concern in the gathering, which was about the recovering and expanding of the Self from modernity. In many different ways, this is an exploration carried out through the Multiversities: healing from past trauma; decolonizing our perceptions of Self, including notions of body, senses, purpose and spirit; remembering our vernacular knowledge systems; re-rooting to a sense of "home," reclaiming love, trust, and compassion, re-imagining larger political-economic systems.

How can we delve deeply into the Self without being captured by the narcissism of the Selfie culture which surrounds us all? The notion of swaraj(rule over the self or harmony of the self), posited by **M.K. Gandhi** and **Rabindranath Tagore** during the Indian freedom struggle, helped to guide our enquiry into the notion of Self—one that is simultaneously unique and inter-connected, local and transcendent, time-bound and timeless, being and not-being, holistic and dynamically evolving. Many of the questions on "decolonization and entanglement" referred to by **Vanessa Andreotti** in her text "*Multilayered Selves*" also showed up in our enquiry. During this process, I could see that we were struggling with the messiness of our own "undoing," an idea Vanessa writes so eloquently about.

In her piece "*In the Cracks of Learning*," **Alessandra Pomarico** discusses the need to move from "safe spaces" to "brave spaces," a question I very much resonated with.

Through our project, *Swaraj University*[1] in Udaipur, Rajasthan, we have intentionally invited in conflict and chaos, seeing them as gifts that can open up new explorations within us as they tend to surface our deeper fears, dilemmas, and shadows. It is often challenging because our institutional conditioning is usually towards blaming, avoiding or running away from these potent learning opportunities.

Our experiences of community living as a core radical pedagogy, align deeply to what Alessandra discusses in her text. The recovery of everyday acts of cooking or cleaning together become important processes for triggering both disruption

and deeper healing and connection. At the same time, we feel it is important to challenge the false divide between "intellectual activities" and "physical labor." We also have tried to expand our notions of community beyond just other humans to include our neighbors in nature. We ask the khojis (seekers) to empathize (even speak to) and reflect on how our neighbours in nature such as the trees, the birds, the snakes, the butterflies, and the mountains would view a particular issue or incident.

I also resonate with **Manolo Callahan**'s text "I*nsurgent Learning and Convivial Research*," where he emphasizes the need for engaging everyday realities, reclaiming public spaces and the use of a wider variety of cultural and social resources and tools, as we re-imagine pedagogy.

There is no need for a single campus, particularly one that looks like a golf-course, factory, or corporate office. It is a powerful rejoinder against the "deficit" frameworks of development and modernity which keep teaching us in India (and the global South) that we are "poor," "uneducated," and "backwards," and instruct us to look down upon our own "informal" or "local" social spaces and tools, with an elitist arrogance and disdain.

In *Swaraj University* we invite the *khojis* to play a game, a "treasure hunt," whereby they try to "re-discover" many people, places, and processes for learning and unlearning in their own local areas such as potters, farmers, artists, musicians, chefs, etc. They quickly discover that they are living among a "rich" web of learning resources and don't need to travel to faraway Western countries or big metropolitan cities to learn. In this way, they start to shift out of the artificial scarcity paradigm that has been induced by modern education.

When we seek to invite in and engage different cosmologies and worldviews, we face a deeper challenge: how to host and sustain inter-cultural and inter-species dialogues in meaningful ways, where we are neither over-romanticizing or over-dominating the "Other." This is a constant struggle, since the violence of modernity runs deep within us. Letting go of the rational, linear, anthropocentric, fear-based, and anxious mind (and the tools that shape it) is a major challenge and an important step. Are we really willing to let our bodies, our intuitions, our friendships, our spirits, the non-human animals and the other species guide us? Are we really willing to walk into the co-creation of utopias without a map or a master-plan? Are we really willing to give up the power—in the form of degrees, money, identity—that has been bestowed upon us by institutions?

At *Swaraj University,* we offer a radical pedagogy called cycle yatra (outer and inner pilgrimage), in which we invite khojis for a one week cycling trip without any money, without any food or medicines, without any technologies, and without any plan about where to go or with whom to stay.

This is an attempt to strip away many of the symbols of modern institutional power in order to enter more humbly into and experience another worldview of local villages, as much as possible, on their terms. One powerful dimension of this involves exploring life from the perspective of gift culture rather than from capitalism, hyper-consumption and transaction-based relationships. Khojis of the cycle yatra are invited to experience what it feels to co-create a powerful field of trust with each other, and with the communities and ecologies they encounter as they travel.

My own journey in the search for radical pedagogies leads me to agree with **Andreotti**'s call for "epistemic reflexivity"—to induce and dance with disenchantment, hopelessness, disgust, and disillusionment of our modern systems. I have found that this practice can help us free our imaginations from always trying to reform or resort to problem solving within the existing frameworks of the dominant education system. Being fully present and courageous in this space can take us into to exploring other worlds of power and possibility.

At *Swaraj University,* we try to support a radical pedagogy of slowing down, scaling down and unplugging in the spirit of a

pause. These notions appear to be ridiculous paradoxes in the modern world which stresses urgency, speed, scaling up, and non-stop technological communication. We have found pedagogies of techno-fasting and collective silence to be powerful tools for a deep kind of unraveling and opening ourselves to new explorations as they help us reclaim different notions of time and place.

In conclusion, I am quite inspired and challenged by this collection of essays. They provide several very meaningful mirrors to examine and deepen our efforts. Radical pedagogies and radical learning spaces are living experiments and therefore messy affairs and always a work-in-progress. As we continually experiment and reflect on ourselves-in-them, we are slowly learning to better hold our contradictions and failures with love, joy, forgiveness and care, and trying not to get overwhelmed by the intellectual purities that exist in the world of text and theorization. It is important to keep reminding our selves of the need for both fierce patience and wild gentleness in the border-crossing, collaborative journeys that unfold ahead.

Manish Jain is deeply committed to regenerating our diverse knowledge systems and cultural imaginations. He has served for the past 19 years as Coordinator and Co-Founder of Shikshantar: The Peoples' Institute for Rethinking Education and Development based in Udaipur, India and is co-founder of the Swaraj University, Creativity Adda, Learning Societies Unconference, Walkouts-Walkon network, Udaipur as a Learning City, and Families Learning Together network in India. He recently helped to launch the Indian Multiversities Network and the Giftival Network. He and his wife Vidhi have been unschooling themselves with their 16 year old daughter, Kanku, in Udaipur, Rajasthan. Manish is passionate about urban organic farming, filmmaking, simulation gaming, bicycling, group facilitation, clowning and slow food cooking.

WHAT MIGHT ALSO BE A NOT: SOME INFORMAL NOTES ON "RADICAL PEDAGOGY IS NOT"

Chris Jones

...how to self-organize a radical informal learning space that resists and contests the commodification and the privatization of our everyday (educational) experiences. How do we enliven a different temporality, in the dominant and almost immanent capitalist structure, in our autonomous learning communities, beyond capitalistic relations?
—Alessandra Pomarico & NO aka Aliosha Pantalone, "Radical Pedagogy is NOT," 2017

It's always great to start with the negative. *"Radical Pedagogy is NOT"* delves into places that may be uncomfortable because there is much collective learning to still be done and because "learning is painful." So how might we go deeper into closer dynamics within the collectivities we make?

If we are dealing with difference when we assemble ourselves from known and unknown places, then we are dealing with different pains. When we come to that vast class room, that tense space, we bring our different faces and our masks. In **Elena Ferrante**'s remarkable book *The Story of a New Name*, **Elena Greco**, journeying out of the poverty of her working class upbringing, speaks from the disorientation of attending a wealthy university. For her the joy of passing undetected in this world or of coping by copying, contains an "almost": "as if I were competing for the prize of the best disguise, the mask worn so well that it was almost a face. Suddenly I was aware of that *almost* …Behind the almost I seemed to see how things stood. I was afraid." This outlines the embodied violence of learning in the presence of violence where subterranean oppressions clash – the hegemonic values of bourgeois culture, the erasure of histories through white supremacy, the silencing of women's intelligence by patriarchal males. Here I speak from a class position. While everyone has their story, they also have their myths. It's complicated, intersecting always, but also not useful to get stuck in who is the most oppressed or hurt.

In these clashes, growing up working class has taught me how to be polite and how to change my accent, how to choose carefully the words I say. Dodging in and out of the art world and academic world with its certain "map of prestige" (**Ferrante**) and power, we learn how to pass but mainly to negotiate confidence, slippery values, and act within a received benign landscape. It's not always clear what people want from you. Oppression is always asymmetrical. The fear is that what rubs off from them to you, is nothing compared to what they want to rub off of you. Are we supposed to give up our own values and learn to move in their wake and fit our own ways of being, knowledges, treasures, trajectories, dislikes and harsh opinions into that wake? Or do we need to provide realness, an exciting biography, an untamed body? Faced with a subliminal passive authority, the mask grips the face.

> *You're educated but you don't talk educated, you've sort of come out of your class, you're in between, you're trying to be us but you're not one of us…*
> *But you don't want us to be like you either…*
> *You must be mad!*
> **—David Robins** and **Philip Cohen**, Knuckle Sandwich: Growing Up in the Working-class City, 1978

It's hard to put yourself back to together from the contradictions of being around middle-class good intentions. The above quote is from a teenage girl addressing a politicised youth worker. Its brilliance lies in her profound lived understanding of the class relations present when middle class people do "engaged" work. Such double-helix conclusions might be applicable to the kind of "pedagogy NOT" structures that we are reviewing. I don't want to be you and you don't want to be me, and yet things are still unequal!

In the last few years, there has been a strong pedagogical challenge to the notion of "participant" and "ally," and these pointed criticisms come from below. There is a challenge for those who seek to break hierarchies and break privileges by becoming partisans (not participants!) and to become accomplices (not allies!) and to truly give something up. By this we mean economically and culturally, although these processes are linked. There is much to be realised in these new and profound roles. There are others, such as the dirigente (someone who conducts or "puts together" as a practice of leadership)[1] or the creation of an andante politics where the temporality of collective organising is at *"a walking pace sustainable over the long haul."*[2] How do we walk together?

I have had my hand somewhat forcibly held and taken to a new horizon, that a participant or ally wants to show me. This has often seemed more like an abyss than a sunrise. If we step into that abyss, and in times where we can talk and practice failure in our encounters, the question remains: who fails harder? If we take the risk that we can practice in convivial moments, who does the risk fall more heavily upon? Will you be there on the other side or will you be somewhere else, somewhere else exotic?

Any struggle to get out of it, to get out of the "almost," is tough. Where is beyond that double face, that mask that can truly lock down? Can I decide where I don't belong? Ferrante's protagonist **Elena Greco** describes the paradox of passing and the claustrophobia of reaching through to a horizon that may not be her own, because she did not want to slot into *"…a universe that was too protected and thus too predictable."* This also rings true. In the class room, looking up at the class ceiling, I still want to have my feet be mine on the class floor.

If there is a debt of understanding to be paid as an accomplice then it may have to be paid beyond—and endure after—the temporary togetherness. The practices we inherit, invent, mutate, and hopefully project into the future then have to be put into practice where we live, or where we want to work, and not just in the temporary encounter. That is solidarity, without qualification.

[1] Ultra-red, "State Listening: The Politics of a Critique of Participation" (Forthcoming)

[2] Ultra-red, "Andante Poltics: Popular Education in the Organizing of Unión de Vecinos," Journal of Aesthetics and Protest, Iss. 8 (Winter 2011/12)

Chris Jones tries to

stand with his feet on the floor of learning through membership of the political sound art collective Ultra-red and by being a part of the radical social centre and archive 56a Infoshop in South London. Jones is a writer and researcher within the Southwark Notes anti-gentrification website and active research group

Much love to those expanding and strengthening our understanding of these double negatives.
LOVE / NOT LOVE.

Annotated Reading List (to be continued)

Ultra-red and Radical Education Forum

Smith, M. (1983)

The Libertarians and Education

A general overview of anarchists and education. Smith makes the distinction in his book between the liberal/progressive educators and the libertarian/anarchist ones.

Fielding, M and Moss, P. (2011)

Radical Education and the Common School

Fielding and Moss contest the current mainstream dominated by markets and competition, standardisation, etc. They argue for democratic radical education to be practiced in human scale common schools and explore how this democratic common school might come about.

Ward, C. (1995)

Talking Schools

A collection of Ward's lectures. The first being a brief overview of anarchists and schools. Other topics include schooling and the city child and a discussion of how to use the environment in teaching.

Gatto, J. T. (2009)

Weapons of Mass Instruction: A Schoolteacher's Journey

Through the Dark World of Compulsory Schooling
Gatto reveals the real function of pedagogy is to render the common population manageable. Escaping this trap requires a different way of growing up, one Gatto calls 'open source learning'.

Tolstoy, L. (trans. Wiener, L.) (1968)

On Education

Tolstoy is described in the introduction of this book as a precursor to A.S. Neill, who later came to similar conclusions about education. The latter part of this book is Tolstoy's account of Yasnaya Polyana: the school that he established for peasants' children in nineteenth century Russia.

Boggs, G.L. (2011)

'A Paradigm Shift in Our Concept of Education' in The next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-first Century. Ed. Scott Kurashige

Boggs underscores our need for a collective re-imagining of education. She advocates for a type of ongoing education that prepares us to live in a sustainable, community centred and environmentally wealthy world.

Dewey, J. (1956)

The Child and the Curriculum, and The School and Society.

These two influential books represent the earliest authoritative statement of Dewey's revolutionary emphasis on education as an experimental, child-centered process. He declares that we must make schools an embryonic community life and stresses the importance of the curriculum as a means of determining the environment of the child.

Ed. Nesbit, T (2005)

'Learning, Literacy, and Identity' in Class Concerns: Adult Education and Social Class

This book contains articles by progressive adult educators which explore how class, gender and race affect different aspects of adult education practice and discourse. It highlights the links between adult education, the material and social conditions of daily and working lives, and the economic and political systems that underpin them.

Beckmann, A. & Cooper, C. (2004)
'Globalisation', the New Managerialism and Education: Rethinking the Purpose of Education in Britain, in The Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies Vol 2 No. 2

'Globalisation' arguably represents the imposition of neoliberal ideology on a transnational scale, a consequence of which has been 'liberalisation' and the rise of the 'new managerialism' in British welfare. This article focuses on the particular implications of these changes on the British education system.

London-Edinburgh Weekend Return Group (1979)
In and Against the State

A1979 pamphlet (later a book) written by the 'London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group', a group of socialist public sector workers who sought to understand how they could overcome the contradiction of being full-time state workers and part-time revolutionaries. Seeking to move beyond being public service workers working within the traditional state/individual client relationship by day and organising to 'smash the state' by night, they explore ways that as 'employees' and 'clients' we can collectivise rather than prevent dissent. Socialist teachers are one of the case studies which appear in the first chapter. The text is available electronically at http://libcom.org/library/against-state-1979

Wright, N. (1989)
Free School: The White Lion Experience

A pamphlet describing and critically assessing White Lion Street Free School, a free school of the kind before the term was appropriated by Cameron and Gove, written by one of the teachers. The Islington school, which operated from 1972-1990, was funded by the Inner London Education Authority for some of this period, and was the only state-funded free school in England.

Ward, C. and Fryson, A.
Streetwork: The Exploding School

The result of Ward and Fryson's research for the UK's Town and Country Planning Association's Education Service on the environmental education of the non-academic urban child. As Ward writes in the introduction, it is "a book about ideas: ideas of the environment as the educational resource, ideas of the enquiring school, the school without walls…"

Shor, I. (ed.) (1987)
Freire for the Classroom: A Sourcebook for Liberatory Teaching

A collection of articles by teachers who have used Freirean-inspired pedagogy in their classroom. A valuable practical guide to adapting Freire's ideas for use outside of their original context. Topics covered include teacher education, ESOL teaching and using Freire's ideas in mathematics teaching.

Benn, M.
'On Dreams and Dilemmas, Class and Cities: Some Thoughts on the Modern Politics of Comprehensives', in A Tribute to Caroline Benn: Education and Democracy. Ed. M. Benn

Tackles the question of why there was never a truly comprehensive education system in the UK. A useful background to current struggles against academies. Part of a collection of essays published in memory of Caroline Benn, the co-founder of the Campaign for Comprehensive Education.

Freire, P. (1970)
Pedagogy of the Oppressed

This book is considered one of the foundational texts of critical pedagogy. Dedicated to what is called "the oppressed" and based on his own experience helping Brazilian adults to read and write, Freire includes a detailed Marxist class analysis in his exploration of the relationship between what he calls 'the colonizer and the colonized'.
In the book Freire refers to traditional pedagogy as 'the banking model' because it treats the student as an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge, like a piggy bank. However, he argues for pedagogy to treat the learner as a co-creator of knowledge.

hooks, b. (1994)
Teaching to Transgress

Influenced by Freire, Hooks writes about Education as the Practice of Freedom. Teaching students to "transgress" against racial, sexual, and class boundaries in order to achieve the gift of freedom is, for Hooks, the teacher's most important goal.

Neill, A.S. (1962)
Summerhill

Summerhill presents radical educational theorist A. S. Neill, looking back in 1971 on fifty years of running his pioneering self-governing free school in Suffolk, in a narrative that details the progressive school's struggles. As an octogenarian, Neill (1884–1973) recalls his advocacy of a then new psychological approach that pointed to emotions, not intellect, as the primary forces shaping a child's growth.
At Summerhill, now run by Neill's daughter, Zoe Readhead, "kids grow up in their own way and at their own speed" in a self-governing, sympathetic environment. Generous in acknowledging his debt to others, including his mentor, psychologist Wilhelm Reich, Neill here freshly details his belief in children's ability to be self-regulating.

Incite! Women of Color Against Violence
The Revolution Will Not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex

A massive and largely unregulated industry, the US nonprofit sector is the world's seventh largest economy. From art museums and university hospitals to think tanks and church charities, over 1.5 million organizations of staggering diversity share the tax-exempt 501(c)(3) designation, if little else. Many social justice organizations have joined this world, often blunting political goals to satisfy government and foundation mandates. But even as funding shrinks and government surveillance rises, many activists often find it difficult to imagine movement-building outside the nonprofit model. Urgent and visionary, The Revolution Will Not Be Funded is an unbeholden exposé of the "nonprofit industrial complex" and its quietly devastating role in managing dissent.

Alexander, T, and Potter, J. (2004)
Education for A Change

This book starts from the premise that our present education system is ill equipped to serve students and society in the twenty-first century. With contributions from a range of leading commentators including Tim Brighouse, Jonathan Poritt, Anita Roddick, Charles Handy and Jonathan Sacks, this is a must-read for school leaders, teachers, policymakers, parents and all education professionals.

Pykett, J. (2007)
'Making Citizens Governable: The Crick report as governmental technology', Journal of Education Policy 22:3

This paper considers the recent introduction of Citizenship Education in England from a governmental perspective, drawing on the later work of Foucault to offer a detailed account of the political rationalities, technologies and subjectivities implicated in contemporary education policy in the formation and governance of citizen[1] subjects.

Vasquez, A. & Oury, P. (1969)
'The Educational Techniques of Freinet', Prospects in Education 1

Freinet is an educational concept that was devised by French educationalist Celestin Freinet (1896-1966). He felt that students learned better by directly experiencing ideas within a context and with a set purpose. This text outlines his methodology, drawing on collaboration, assertiveness and the creation of publications and journals by students.

Boal, A. (1992)
Games for Actors and Non-Actors

Games for Actors and Non-Actors is the classic and best selling book by the founder of Theatre of the Oppressed, Augusto Boal. It sets out the principles and practice of Boal's revolutionary Method, showing how theatre can be used to transform and liberate everyone – actors and non-actors alike.

Freire, P. and Macedo, D.
Literacy: Reading the Word and the World

Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo invite us to re-examine the literacy crisis. They see literacy not merely as a technical skill to be acquired but as a form of cultural politics. Literacy is viewed as a set of practices that either empowers or disempowers people, and is analysed according to whether it serves to reproduce existing social formations or serves as a set of cultural practices promoting democratic change.

Ranciere, J. (1995)
The Ignorant Schoolmaster

A book based on the experiences of Joseph Jacotot. Having elaborated a method to teach students who could not speak his language, Jacotot in 1818 announced that all people are equally intelligent. From this postulate, Jacotot devised a philosophy and a method for what he called 'intellectual emancipation' – a method that would allow, for instance, illiterate parents to themselves teach their children how to read. The greater part of the book is devoted to a description and analysis of Jacotot's method, its premises, and its implications for understanding both the learning process and the emancipation that results when that most subtle of hierarchies, intelligence, is overturned.

Auerbach, E. (1997)
Making Meaning, Making Change

Rather than presenting adult language students with synthetic materials developed outside the classroom, Auerbach advocates that teachers combine "conscious listening," namely a sympathetic awareness of what students' real concerns are, with "catalyst" activities, i.e. language activities that get students to open up and express their real thoughts and feelings. Making Meaning contains an impressive inventory of such activities, which can include what are often called "icebreakers" to get students talking, class newspapers, picture albums, class rituals, or student-produced graphics.

Freire, P. and Shor, I. (1986)
A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education

Two world renowned educators, Paulo Freire and Ira Shor, speak passionately about the role of education in various cultural and political arenas. They demonstrate the effectiveness of dialogue in action as a practical means by which teachers and students can become active participants in the learning process. Shor and Freire describe their own experiences in liberating the classroom from its traditional constraints. They demonstrate how vital the teacher's role is in empowering students to think critically about themselves and their relation, not only to the classroom, but to society.

Waugh, C. (2009)
Plebs: The Lost Legacy of Independent Working-Class Education

http://www.ifyoucan.org.uk/PSE/Home_files/PSE%20Plebs%20pamphlet.pdf

Hammond, J.L. (1998)
Fight to Learn: Popular Education and Guerilla War in El Salvador

Popular education played a vital role in the twelve-year guerrilla war against the Salvadoran government. This book is a study of the period's pedagogy and politics. Hammond interviewed more than 100 Salvadoran students and teachers for this book, recounting their experiences in their own words, and vividly conveying how they coped with the hardships of war to educate civilian communities. Fighting to Learn tells how poorly educated peasants overcame their sense of inferiority to discover that they could teach each other and work together in a common struggle.

Freeman, J. and Levine, C. (1994)
Untying the Knot: Feminism, Anarchism and Organisation

This text investigates the relationship between feminism and anarchist principles of organisation

Beattie, N. (2002)
The Freinet Movements of France, Italy, Germany and Spain 1920–2000

'In an age where there is increasingly explicit concern with citizenship and values, as well as literacy and numeracy, and at a time when lifelong learning is high on the political agenda, this book offers a powerful new vision of the educational enterprise. The book is a tour de force. It breaks new historical ground in documenting almost for the first time, the life and work of one of the greatest educational thinkers. It also provides a powerful new vision for education in the twenty-first century.' – Comparative Education, Vol. 39, No. 3, August 2003

I think it is necessary to educate the new generations to the value of defeat, how to handle it, and to the Humanity that emerges from it. To build an identity able to sense a common destiny, where one can fail and start over, without their value and dignity being undermined.

(I think it is necessary to educate the new generations) not to become so competitive, not to pass over the body of others to arrive first.

In this world of vulgar and dishonest winners, of false and opportunist abusers, this world that belongs to those important people who have the power and robs the present (imagine the future!), to those obsessed with success, to all who want to appear and become someone ...

To this anthropology of winners, I prefer the loser. I am well exercised at it. And that reconciles me with my sacred small things.

Pier Paolo Pasolini

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illustrations in this book are originally from What's There to Learn: Free Home University | Workbook, PS Guelph\ Musagetes, 2018

drawings:
Anna Kurbatova, Aglaya Oleynikova